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Sacrum septenarium; or, The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost ...

Henry Formby

SACRUM SEPTENARIUM.

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SACRUM SEPTENARIUM

OR

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN

THE LIFE AND PERSON OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

FOR

THE GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION OF HER CHILDREN

BY THE

REV. HENRY FORMBY,

TERTIARY PRIEST OF THE ORDER OF ST DOMINIC.



"Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus, quo qui usi sunt
participes facti sunt amicitiae Dei, propter disciplinae dona
commendati."
—(SAP. VII. 14.)

"Ne dimittas legem matris tuae, ut addatur gratia capiti tuo."
—(PROV. I. 8.)

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TO THE
REV. EDWARD CASWALL,
PRIEST,
OF THE ORATORY OF ST PHILIP NEERI,
IN BIRMINGHAM,

These Pages,

PROPOSING THE EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT MOTHER
OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY
TO THE MORE ATTENTIVE STUDY OF ALL HER CHILDREN,
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR AUTHOR,
HENRY FORMBY,
TERTIARY PRIEST, O.S.D.

*

Sancta Maria Immaculata

ora

pro populo.

BRIEF NOTICE.

A RECENT writer in France, "Le Pere Jean Baptiste Belot, S.J." * gives the following as the reason for writing his treatise on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost:—

"If progress in the spiritual life, and examples of sanctity are so rare even among persons who make profession of piety, one cause may be assigned among others for this, namely, the condition of ignorance in which a great number of Christians live, as regards the working of the Holy Ghost in us, the excellence of His gifts, and their importance to every one of us for the sanctification of our souls. The present treatise on the gifts of the Holy Ghost has for its object to dissipate this state of ignorance, and to awaken the faith of the people in the working of the Holy Ghost in them."

Between the present work and that of the French writer, written for the purpose thus stated, there will be found probably scarce any other resemblance except the almost perfect identity of the object aimed at, viz., *to awaken*

* Published in France in the town of Clermont Ferrand, at the Librairie Catholique.

the faith of the people in the working of the Holy Ghost in them."

The Church prays on the feast of the B.M.V. help of Christians (May 24),—"Almighty and merciful God, who for the protection of the Christian people hast wonderfully constituted a perpetual aid in the most blessed Virgin Mary," and we may piously hope that this source of aid will not fail in the present need.

For if the writer above quoted be justified in lamenting that so much ignorance should prevail as to the gifts of the Holy Ghost and their operation in us, there can be no more affectionate corrective of that which he laments, than the example of the great Mother of the Christian family mirroring in her own person, for the guidance and instruction of her children, the operation of these Seven Gifts. But independently of this particular writer's lament, whether well founded or not, there can be no higher or better subject of study than the gifts of God the Holy Ghost, and no better and more winning exemplification of them than that of Blessed Mary, the Holy Mother of the Christian family.

H. F.

A PRELIMINARY ADDRESS

TO THE

DAUGHTERS OF MARY,

INVITING THEM TO A MINUTE AND SPECIAL STUDY
OF THE EXAMPLE OF THEIR HOLY MOTHER.



THE power of example is a truth of both experience and revelation. Horace, rising up from reading the poems of Homer, is strongly impressed with the value of the example which Ulysses gives, what great things "courage, united to wisdom, is able to effect."

The inspired writer says, "Such as is the ruler of the city, such also are they who dwell in it" (Ecclus. x. 2). "Like people like priest," again, was also a saying current in the days of the prophets of Israel (Osee iv. 9).

When God gave His benediction to His world and bade it increase and multiply, your place in it was raised to a wonderful dignity; a dignity that under the Christian law has been still further increased, for the choice is now placed before you of either becoming the honoured mother of a Christian family, or better still, one of the Virgin Spouses of Jesus Christ; and in either case a wonderful trust will be reposed in you for promoting the well-being of God's world by the influence of your own good example.

But in order that your example may come to be of that kind which will produce good fruit in those who will naturally look up to it, and be to them the sweet odour of Jesus Christ, it is necessary that you, who are in due time to set this good example to others in your own person, should prepare yourselves to be able to do so by your own attentive study of the Great Example of Christian life which God, in His care for His

world, has given to the whole of the wide-spread Christian household of all nations, in their elect Mother Mary.

For ever since Mary has, by the gift of God, been constituted the Mother of the whole Christian people, nothing, of course, ought to be more worthy of the most affectionate and attentive study on the part of all the children of her household, whether sons or daughters, than the question how they may best imitate the example of their Mother. You, however, are not only daughters of the great Christian family, but also, by a distinct act of adoption, commended in a more special manner still to the care of your Holy Mother, under the most honourable name of "daughters of Mary." You, therefore, have a special title to remember that it is the proper prerogative of your sex to be able to reflect, in your own persons, the characteristic feminine excellencies of the great maternal example that is placed before all.

In order, however, to this end, it scarcely needs to be said, that those of Mary's daughters who have truly at heart honestly to endeavour to bring their own example into a real conformity with that of their elect Mother, will not easily think any reasonable pains too burdensome in order to understand and to satisfy themselves as to what her example really is. The true daughter of Mary who rightly appreciates the nobility of God's gift of the understanding (whatever others may do) will not easily rest contented with the ignoble and superficial notion, that any little slender extra degree of piety is all that is needed to attain to the standard which may be justly expected from a daughter of Mary, lest she be found to bear a designation of great honour to very little or no corresponding purpose.

God Almighty has given to woman the place in His world to be the honoured and beloved helpmate of man ; but God made choice of Mary

by a special election, the dignity of which no words can describe, that took her away from her natural place in the creation, to become the elect helpmate of the Three Persons of the Ever-Blessed and Divine Trinity in Their work for the redemption and salvation of men.

But all who become sons and daughters of the Christian household are further made the receivers of the gifts and graces of God the Holy Ghost, and these gifts are given to perfect the work which Mary's Divine Son has accomplished for His redeemed, by His offering of Himself a victim on the cross ; by His doctrine ; and by His foundation and establishment of His Church, in the society of which they pass their lives.

Of these gifts of God the Holy Ghost, there are seven which are specially known by their appropriate names ; forming, according to the language of the Liturgy for the Feast of Pentecost, the *Sacrum Septenarium* — the sacred

sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost. They are :—

- I.—The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.
- II.—The Spirit of Piety.
- III.—The Spirit of Knowledge.
- IV.—The Spirit of Fortitude.
- V.—The Spirit of Counsel.
- VI.—The Spirit of Understanding.
- VII.—The Spirit of Wisdom (Isaiah xi. 2).

And though it ought to be here amply sufficient to say, that nothing which is the gift of God can possibly be given in vain, yet who can fail, on casting a glance at even their names, to perceive how invaluable gifts such as these—proceeding directly from the Divine Person of the Lord and Giver of life—must be, for the needs and exigencies of our life ; and how indispensable they must undoubtedly prove in the way of necessary aid and assistance to

all who desire to be able to set a good example before others ?

But there is always this important characteristic in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost to be borne in mind, namely, that they are given as aids to assist and perfect the gifts of God in His natural creation ; and that in order to their beneficial operation in us, there is annexed the condition that we for our part should not fail to correspond with them, in so far as the gifts we receive from God by our natural creation enable us to do so.

And here we come in view of that which forms so wonderful a glory and dignity of the Great Mother of the Christian household. She stands before the whole family of her children as the elect associate of the Third Divine Person of the Ever-blessed Trinity, mirroring in her maternal example the operation of His seven gifts, and showing to her children not only how humbly and earnestly they should be ready at all times

to supplicate that these great gifts should be poured out upon them, but how they may take pattern by her elect maternal example, in doing their part as good Christians, at all times faithfully to correspond with their holy inspirations.

HENRY FORMBY.

FEAST OF ST DOMINIC,
1874.

SACRUM SEPTENARIUM.



THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST :

AS

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE LIFE AND PERSON
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN,

THE MOTHER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY,

FOR THE GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION OF HER
CHILDREN.



DISCOURSE THE FIRST.

The sovereign value of the homely and intelligible example of the mother of the family in the Divine plan of the human creation, and the consequent fitness of God's giving to His Christian family the inestimable benefit of a homely and intelligible maternal example.

It would be manifestly out of keeping to make any attempt to open a series of plain and homely instructions on a subject which cannot

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fail to be most near and dear to the hearts of all the children of the great Christian family, otherwise than in the simplest and the least pretentious manner. Every one may easily know that God has formed His world on the plan that the children of the families, by which He provides for the increase and multiplying of His creation, should look up in each family or household to their father and mother for an example by which to take pattern. No one, indeed, can fail to perceive that it is a most wise provision of the Divine Creator's work that the children should learn to form themselves by copying and imitating the model thus provided and set before them. "Honour thy father and thy mother," as St Paul insists, is the first commandment to which any promised reward is annexed, viz., "that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee." But the honour paid by the children to father and mother was never meant to be the mere obedience of dependants upon superior power. The Divine plan assumes that their obedience is to proceed from the willing

belief, on the part of the children, that both parents, in their respective spheres, are what they should always endeavour to be, viz., suitable models of conduct, which it is a privilege and a delight for the children to be able to study, and to do their best to follow. In infancy, and in the early years of childhood, the example of the mother must necessarily, by force of circumstances, go for much more in the formation of the character and the understanding of the child than the example of the father. The father is supposed to be the greater part of the day away from the house, busy at his daily work, by which he provides for the maintenance and support of his household; and the children consequently are much more the constant companions of the mother, as she is supposed to be continually in her house with the children by her side, who are hourly learning all their early ideas and knowledge, either directly from her, or under her immediate eye. Even as the family grows up, the daughters will always naturally look up much more to the example of the mother, as

more akin to the condition of their sex, and as abounding much more in the kind of direction as to the various incidents of their life on which they need the light and guidance of an example.

The pattern, therefore, of the mother of the family, according to the Divine plan originally established under the natural law of creation, and confirmed under the covenant of Redemption in Jesus Christ, may be easily perceived to be one of sovereign importance to the well-being of the children. The care, indeed, of both parents for the children is by Divine appointment, and the honour of the children for both father and mother has the sanction of one and the same Divine law. Parental care, moreover, is of that kind for which no adequate substitute can be found ; for when children are deprived by death of the care of their parents, inasmuch as there exists no other human care that can adequately replace what they have lost, we see that God himself acknowledges the loss as irreparable, and does not disdain Himself to step in and to take the care of the orphan child into His own

hands. “Orphano Tu eris adjutor” (“Thou wilt be the aid of the orphan”), says the Psalmist. Not a sparrow falls to the ground except with the knowledge of God; and certainly not a parent is withdrawn from the care of children except by the act of God. We may thus easily perceive how great and precious that parental care must be, which, on being withdrawn by the act of God from the children, God himself deigns to declare that He takes the orphans under His own protection.

From this we easily come to learn the truth, that when God condescended to open a new covenant of mercy to all the children of Adam, without any exception, through the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, He would be sure not to undo the original plan of His creation. If there was to be a new universal Christian brotherhood, uniting all the tribes and kindreds of the whole earth in the new household of the Faith, and in the unity of the one Catholic Church—that is, in other words, in the bosom of the great Christian family of all the nations—there would be mani-

festly needed for this great family, in accordance with the Divine plan, the example of the mother. In short, we may very easily perceive this example of the mother to be indispensable, except God is to be understood to have formed the restored order of Redemption upon a totally changed plan from His original order of the creation. But this is impossible, for with God, says the Scripture, there is neither changing nor shadow of change. "Thou art the same," says the Psalmist, and "Thy years do not fail." It could not be tolerated for a moment that the holy Apostle should speak of the "household of faith," and that the Church should speak of herself in her Liturgies as a family, unless a certain verity and truth of genuine and real family-life in the Church, requiring the presence of the mother, were found manifested in it. There must plainly, therefore, be in the Church the presence and power of one chosen pre-eminent mother of the great Christian family, to whom every eye can be incessantly turned from every quarter of the globe, whose will is to become law to her children, and to

study to conform to whose holy pattern and example is not only the very best of discipline and education, but the most direct path to honour and well-being in this present life, and to eternal glory and bliss in the next. In a word, we cannot have the one great Christian family as the universal brotherhood of all the nations of the earth, without the living presence, influence and example of the one elect mother, whom all generations are to call blessed.

The task, then, that now opens itself before us will be specially to consider the function of the Holy Virgin Mother of Jesus in the economy of the Christian Redemption, as affording to all generations the elect example which it is fitting that the mother of the great Christian family of all people should set before all her children for their imitation in every age, nation, and clime of the earth. Now, nothing is more familiarly within the experience of all known families than that the example of the mother should always be so perfectly level to the capacity of the children, as that they may always find both ease and delight in their

attempts to imitate it. But all is far from said when we assert that, by the order of God's natural creation, the example of the mother is in a pre-eminent degree given to the children to take pattern by. This example is both prior in order of time, in being the first with which they become familiarly acquainted, and prior also in the affection of the children, from the very much greater debt which God has placed all children under to their mother, for the constant care and nursing—so indispensable to their state of helplessness in infancy—which they receive at her hands. If, then, seeing that by the Divine order of creation the mother's example is in a special degree the gift of God for the formation of the character of the children, it becomes easy to perceive why her example should be not only holy and irreproachable, but why it must also be of a kind lovingly and wisely to adapt itself to the capacities of the children. For if the children have not an intelligible and easily imitable pattern in their mother's example, where else can they possibly hope to find it?

What, then, must we not have to believe and maintain with reference to the sovereign value of the maternal pattern which is to be set before the whole family of the redeemed that is gathered out of every nation, tribe and kindred, for their continual loving study and imitation? In what words shall we be able worthily to speak of the chosen example of the elect Lady, whom Jesus Christ, having first given Himself to her as her Son, has afterwards given to be a mother to all collectively and to each singly of the great widely-spread Christian family of His redeemed, comprising all generations, all times, and all nations and kindreds of the whole earth?

What, indeed, are we to say of this surpassing example, except that we cannot be otherwise than confident, that while it will be certain to possess a sublimity proper to itself that is without a parallel, this sublimity, notwithstanding, will bring no prejudice to the homeliness whereby the mother's example always condescends to the infirmity of her children. However lofty and irreproachable

the example may be, it will, nevertheless, be one that will never fail always to adapt itself to the children in such a manner as to be perfectly capable of being studied, loved, and imitated by them.

Now it is manifestly one thing to tread the heights of sanctity in such an exalted way that the ordinary beholder, becoming amazed and bewildered by his perception of the sublimity that has been attained, finds all thought of the example being one that is presented for his own study and imitation entirely extinguished. And it is another, to combine the sublimity of the example with the homeliness, simplicity, and affection of the mother of the family, who perfectly knows that her children are looking up to her; and who understands, with the admirable discernment proper only to the mother, how to make her example at once perfect for the sake of the improvement of her children, and at the same time perfectly homely and attainable for the sake of their encouragement. For, to repeat what we have above said, that which children require before all things in an

example is to be filled with the thought of its being within their reach, that they may be the more moved in consequence to try to imitate it. Indeed, without this indelible character of homeliness and simplicity, the true value of the example of the mother of the family would be destroyed, and the end which God has designed that this example should fulfil in His creation would be frustrated. Peerless perfection in this example, by itself alone, would manifestly fail of its end; for the children would then say, "Which of us can climb thus up to heaven to bring this down to us, that we may hear and perform it in act?" (Deut. xxx. 12.) And if homeliness were its sole characteristic, as need not be said, this would fail to command that universal love and respect which the nature of the case manifestly calls for. What the needs of the great Christian family plainly require is that God should work for them a marvel of His wisdom and goodness, and give them the example of an Elect Mother, in whose person sublimity without equal may combine and unite itself to the homeliness and simplicity

that the Divine plan appoints to be the indispensable characteristic of the mother's example. For then, and then only, will it be possible for us, while we admire not only to desire to imitate, but also to have a firm hold of the encouraging conviction that we have set before us an example perfectly homely, perfectly intelligible, and perfectly within the reach even of our infirm power and capacity to do our best to imitate.

Now, S. Peter Damian says, that, as there could have been no Redemption except the Son of God had been born of a Virgin, so it was indispensable that the Virgin herself should first be born, from whom the Eternal Word might become flesh. It was necessary therefore, that the house should first be built, into which the Heavenly King might deign to come down and sojourn ; that house namely, he says, of which Solomon speaks,—“ Wisdom hath built herself a house, and hath hewn out seven pillars ” (Prov. ix. 1). Thus this Virginal house has stood propped up with seven pillars, for the venerable Mother of the Lord was

endowed with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost ; that is, with the gifts of—

1. Wisdom.
2. Understanding.
3. Counsel.
4. Fortitude.
5. Knowledge.
6. Piety.
7. The fear of the Lord.

(S. Peter Damian. Sermon on the *Nativity*).

The above words of S. Peter Damian explain to us the secret of the combined sublimity and simplicity of the example given by the Holy Virgin Mother to her children of the great Christian family of all nations.

In the next discourse it will be our task to show how God, by a wonderful provision of His mercy and wisdom, through the Sacrament of Confirmation, gives to all the Christian people the same seven gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and we shall then perceive how He thereby provides the children of His great Christian family with the power and capacity to profit by that which is both the perfect and also the intelligible

example of the Virgin-Mother which He has set before them. To this end we shall betake ourselves to S. Thomas of Aquin, to learn from him, as briefly as may be, what it is principally needful to know relatively to these gifts of the Holy Ghost, commending in the meantime our undertaking to the patronage of the Holy Mother, the "Seat of Wisdom," in the dutiful and humble spirit becoming her children.

DISCOURSE THE SECOND.

Sacrum Septenarium. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and in what way the theology of the Catholic Church teaches us that they are necessary aids for the attainment of salvation.

IN our preceding discourse we shall find that we have come clearly in view of three very important truths, each in their degree calculated to exert an extremely practical influence on our entire conduct throughout life. The first is—

I. That in the economy of the Christian Redemption, the Holy Virgin Mother of Jesus has been given as a mother to the whole of the great Christian family, to place before her children a true and perfect mother's example, for their imitation and guidance.

II. That, being herself endowed with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, she has set her children the special example of a perfect correspondence with these gifts, and of the

manner in which the actions of daily life ought to be perfectly controlled and directed by them.

III. That God in the riches of His grace, and desiring that all men should be saved, and should come to the knowledge of the truth, has given to all the children of the Christian family, in the holy Sacrament of Confirmation, the same seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; among other untold benefits flowing from which they receive the capacity of profiting by the example which their great Mother has placed before them of her own perfect correspondence with these gifts.

If proof could be supposed to be needed that God gives these seven gifts of the Holy Ghost—the Sacrum Septenarium for which the Church prays at the season of Pentecost—to all without reserve, it will only be necessary to seek our proof from the office for the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

“(Rubric.) Then the Bishop, with his hands extended towards the persons to be confirmed, says—

“ *Let us pray.*

“ Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them the remission of all their sins, send forth upon them Thy Sevenfold Spirit, the Holy Paraclete, from heaven.—Amen.

“ *V. The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding.—R. Amen.*

“ *V. The Spirit of Counsel and Fortitude.—R. Amen.*

“ *V. The Spirit of Knowledge and of Piety.—R. Amen.*

“ Replenish them with the Spirit of Thy fear ; and sign them with the sign of the Cross in Thy mercy unto life eternal, &c.” (*From the Roman Pontifical.*)

Passing, then, from the words of the office of the administration of the sacrament, we proceed to learn as briefly as possible what is necessary to be known respecting these seven gifts of the Holy Ghost from the words of the Angelic Doctor S. Thomas of Aquin.

S. Thomas's method of treating his subjects,

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we perhaps ought to observe, will possibly appear a little peculiar at the present day. It consists in opening the question under consideration by a statement of the principal reasons which appear to make against his real doctrine; which being done, he brings forward some brief statement in a contrary sense, commonly taken either from the Holy Scripture, or from some great and distinguished Father of the Church; after which he proceeds to unfold his own doctrine, concluding with an appropriate solution of the difficulties that he had raised against it in the beginning.

S. Thomas then first raises the doubt whether it may not be said that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are not distinguishable from many of the virtues, and that they are in fact only the Christian virtues under other names. Having met this and other difficulties by a citation from S. Gregory the Great, he proceeds to unfold his own doctrine, from which we quote the following words:—"And, therefore, in order to distinguish the Gifts from the Virtues, we shall do well to adhere to the mode of naming them which we

find in the Scripture, where they are spoken of, not as gifts, but as 'spirits.' Thus it is said in Isaias, 'There shall rest upon Him the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding,' &c. (Isaias xi. 2), from which words it is manifestly given to be understood that these seven gifts are there enumerated according as they are in us by Divine inspiration; for the word inspiration points to some moving power that acts from without. It is to be considered, indeed, that there is a twofold moving principle in man, one internal to himself, which is his reason; the other external to him, which is God. But it is manifest that everything which is moved should be rightly disposed to the power by which it is moved, and the perfection of the thing moved, in so far as it is a thing capable of being moved, is the disposition by which it is disposed to be rightly moved by the power that moves it. The more exalted, therefore, the moving power, the more necessary it is that the thing moved should be rightly disposed towards it, as we see that the scholar must be more perfectly disposed towards his master in proportion as he is to receive a

higher doctrine from him. But it is manifest that the human virtues perfect the man, according as he is born to be moved by his reason in everything that he may do either outwardly or inwardly. It is necessary, therefore, that there should be in man a higher order of perfection, according to which he becomes properly disposed to be moved by God. And these perfections are called 'gifts,' not solely because they are infused by God, but for the reason that by them a man is made prompt to be moved by the Divine inspiration, as it is said (Isaias l. 5), 'The Lord hath opened mine ear and I do not gainsay, neither have I gone back.' "

From the above words of S. Thomas we shall easily gather what his answer will be to the question, "*Are these Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost necessary to a man for his salvation?*"

After stating some arguments which appear to prove that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are not necessary to salvation, S. Thomas says : "*(Sed contra est)* But against this it is to be considered, that among the gifts, Wisdom

appears to be the first in order, and the fear of the Lord the last; but both of these are necessary to salvation, for of Wisdom it is said that 'God loveth no one except those who dwell with wisdom' (Wisd. vii.); and of Fear it is said that 'he who is without fear cannot be justified' (Eccles. i.); therefore the other intermediate gifts also are necessary to salvation.

"I answer, then," S. Thomas says, "that the gifts, being, as we have said, a certain perfecting of the man, by which he is rightly disposed to hearken to the Divine inspiration, it follows that for those things for which the instinct of reason does not suffice, but an inspiration of the Holy Ghost is required, the gifts become necessary. But the human reason is perfected in two ways by God—first by natural perfection, that is, by a perfection that is according to the natural light of reason; and secondly, by a certain supernatural perfection through the theological virtues. And although this second perfection is in itself greater than the first, the first perfection is had by a man in a more complete manner than the second; for

the first is had by a man after the manner of a full and entire possession, whereas the second is possessed only imperfectly, for we love and know God only imperfectly. But it is manifest that whatsoever possesses *perfectly* either its nature, form, or power, can act by itself in accordance with these (not, indeed, to the exclusion of the working of God, who inwardly works in every nature and intelligent will), whereas that which possesses only imperfectly any nature, form, or power, cannot so act, except it be moved by another. Thus the sun can give light by itself, because it is perfectly bright in itself; while the moon, being imperfect in this respect, can only give light in so far as it receives light itself. The physician also, who perfectly knows his art, can act by himself; whereas his pupil, who is not as yet fully initiated, cannot act by himself, but needs to be directed how to act. In the same manner, therefore, so far as those things are concerned which are by nature properly subject to human reason, a man may act by the dictate of his reason, and if herein he receives any additional

aid from God by some special inspiration, this is to be understood to come from the superabounding goodness of God.

“But in order to the final supernatural end to which even our natural reason moves us, in so far as it is after a fashion imperfectly informed by the theological virtues, the movement of our natural reason does not of itself suffice, except there be also besides a movement and an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, according to what is said by the apostle, ‘They who are moved by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God, and heirs’ (Rom. viii.); and in the Psalms, ‘Thy Spirit shall lead me into the right land’ (Ps. cxlii.), the reason being that none can come to the inheritance of that land of the blessed except he be moved and guided by the Holy Ghost. Hence, in order to the attainment of this final supernatural end, it is *necessary* for a man to have the gifts of the Holy Ghost.”

S. Thomas then proceeds to treat in a similar manner several other questions relative to these seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; but as it is not

indispensable to our subject that we should burden our readers with his weighty words, the close reasoning of which must appear in rather strong contrast with the more ephemeral treatment of subjects with which our own times are familiar, we shall forbear. All that our present purpose absolutely needs is gained when we have shown what the great Doctor of the Church says respecting the sovereign dignity and value of these gifts of the Holy Ghost for the purposes of Christian life, and the indispensable task they are appointed to fulfil in rightly directing us in the work of obtaining our salvation.

Plainly nothing can be more manifest than that the gifts of God the Holy Ghost, which, as we have seen, are freely given to all in the Sacrament of Confirmation, are intended to be used and turned to good account in all humility and submissive gratitude to the Divine Giver by those who are made receivers of them. But it is clear also that they are by no means of a nature to force their efficacy upon any of those who receive them, independently of their own

grateful acceptance and co-operation with them. No one by these gifts is made either pious or brave, intelligent or wise, against his will; on the contrary, our diligent co-operation with them, or, in S. Thomas's words, our disposition to be moved by them is an indispensable condition of their having their due effect. Since, then, nothing is more consonant to the very first provision of God for the bringing of His creation to perfection, than that the children of the family should be taught by the example of their Mother, it is not easy to see how there can be any one thing more beneficently devised by the goodness and mercy of God for the right education and improvement of all the children of the widespread Christian family, than that the great Mother of this family should be known to set an example to her children for their imitation of a perfect co-operation with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. For let us never lose out of our sight the truth, which our own reason must unite with the authority of the great Doctor of the Church to impress upon our minds, that these seven gifts are necessary for

every Christian, in order to the work of his or her salvation.

The case, then, to sum up in brief what we have said, will stand thus. God gives to all the Christian people in the Sacrament of Confirmation the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and these gifts are not of a nature to force their efficacy upon even the careless or the indifferent, to say nothing of the irreverent and the scorers. In order for us to benefit by them in the work of our salvation, for which they are necessary aids, we are required to do our part to cultivate them and co-operate with them, and we must diligently dispose ourselves to be moved by them. But in the order of God's creation He has appointed, as the first law of creation, that the children should first of all begin to learn from their mother's example. What, therefore, will not be the priceless value to the Christian family of the example of their great Mother, showing them the faultless pattern of a perfect correspondence with the seven gifts of God the Holy Ghost, which by the grace and bounty of God are given freely to every member of the great

Christian household, as the necessary Divine aids to assist us all in the labour of working out our salvation?

Although, then, the sacred records appear to be even sparing rather than abundant in what they have related respecting the elect Lady, who has been given as Mother to the Christian family, our task will nevertheless be strictly limited to gathering from them the requisite proofs of the Blessed Virgin-Mother having given to her children this chosen and elect pattern of a perfect correspondence with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; and of her having perfectly exemplified, for their guidance and imitation, the effect which these gifts ought to have upon the actions of our daily life.

Should any new honour hereby accrue to the Holy Mother, whom all generations are to vie with each other in calling Blessed, whom can we find who is more worthy such honour? And if her example becomes by what we are about to say, in any respect, to their exceeding great benefit, either dearer and more valued, or

better understood and better appreciated by her children, “ Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini tuo da gloriam ” (“ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name give the glory ”).
“ Servi inutiles sumus ” (“ We are unprofitable servants ”).

DISCOURSE THE THIRD.

The First Gift of the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of the “Fear of the Lord,” and how the elect Mother of the Christian family exemplifies this spirit for the guidance of her children.

THE great characteristics in a mother's example, as we have said, are (1.) the sagacity by which she never fails to teach her children that which they most need to learn, and (2.) the discriminating patience with which she is careful always to make her instruction proportionate to their capacities. A mother's teaching is never found to beat the air with idle attempts to anticipate the powers of her children ; but, by the happy instinct of which God is the author, she is gifted with the never-failing ability accurately to discern their needs, as well as wisely to gauge their capacities ; and to these needs and to these capacities it is that she adapts her example.

Ours will now be the pleasant and instructive task of studying in what way the example which the great Mother of the Christian family sets before her children graciously moulds itself according to the above-mentioned wise provision of the Divine Creator, prescribing that the mother's example to her children shall always be one which they may find their delight and profit in striving to imitate.

In the case of the children of a family, how beautiful soever may have been the example of the mother while she was yet a maiden, this of course can form no part whatever of her children's first early acquaintance with her. Destitute alike of all power of inquiry into, or capacity to reason, as to her previous life, they see in her only their existing protectress and teacher; and it is by their own little daily experience that they easily come to the conviction that it is from her teaching and example that they have most to learn. There is not wanting a certain beautiful analogy to this in the example set to her children by the great Mother of the Christian family. What our great Christian

Mother's example was when she was a chosen and elect Virgin in the Temple, we can only know in the way of the loving, innocent belief proper to children—viz., that it must have been to the fullest measure all that it should have been. It was plainly not intended that it should be known to us after the manner of an example that is proposed for near study and imitation. It is only when the title which we have had graciously given to us, whereby to claim her as our Mother, is on the very point of being ratified in the decrees of the Most Holy Trinity, that we have set before us the first definite maternal example on her part, which, as her children, we can derive profit from closely studying.

And what here is particularly deserving our most minute attention is, that, as we have said, quite in conformity with the wise provision of the Divine Creator regulating what the mother's pattern to her children should be, her first known example is found to be one inculcating the very lesson which, as the children of her family, we most of all need to learn, at the same time that

it is also the one best suited to our capacities for learning.

This lesson is the "FEAR OF THE LORD." "Come, ye children, unto Me," says the Divine Spirit, "and I will teach you the FEAR OF THE LORD" (Ps. xxxiii. 12). And the beautiful truth, to the discovery of which we are now come, is that the very first acquaintance which it is given to the children of the Christian family to make with their great Mother, is one where her example in the most striking manner inculcates upon them this lesson of the "Fear of the Lord." In her memorable interview with the holy Archangel Gabriel, where her children first come to know what her example really is, she appears before them as one so wholly and entirely possessed by the "Fear of the Lord," so perfectly docile to the holy promptings of this Divine Spirit, as to be found simply immovable by any rival and contrary attraction, simply inaccessible to so much as any thought or consideration that would draw her away from perfect conformity to its precepts and requirements.

But before we proceed to the requisite search into the particulars of the manner in which our Great Mother sets before us her first maternal example of perfect docility to the Spirit of the "Fear of the Lord," a previous inquiry will be in place, that we may attain to some assured knowledge of the grounds on which we are entitled to say that her example in this respect is one that teaches the first elementary lesson in religion, which, as children of the Christian family, we most of all need to begin by learning. In other words, we want first of all to know why it is that to be docile to the promptings of the holy Spirit of the "Fear of the Lord," is at one and the same time both the most indispensable and also the most elementary lesson that the child of the Christian family needs to learn.

"It is not possible," says the Scripture, "to be justified without fear" (Ecclus. i. 28). Whatever may have been possible in the state of innocence clothed with sanctifying grace, which Adam and Eve enjoyed by the grace of God previous to their fall, nothing is more cer-

tain, than that in our fallen state, there is no possible approach to God which can properly remain without fear. Fallen human nature, in the persons of Adam and Eve, has been brought into contact with God as the Divine Judge of man, and continues to live in this world under the expectation of His future judgment and under the present effect of His sentence, that imposes during life a time of penal labour, liable to abound in continual sorrow and pain, which, when the time comes, must terminate in the carrying into effect of His sentence—"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." To fallen human nature, therefore, God cannot be otherwise known than as the "Judge" before whom all flesh must come for judgment; and this knowledge of God must always rightly and justly inspire "fear;" a fear indeed proper to children—that is to say, filial, and not a servile fear, but still "fear," true and real fear.

From the beginning to the end of the Sacred Scriptures, there is but one uniform and unvarying way of speaking of the religion of

man to his Maker in his fallen state, and this is as the "Fear of God." Those who have any religion are said to "fear God," and those who are without religion are said to have no fear of God. Thus, when Joseph, not as yet making himself known to his brethren, desires to reassure them that, though he had put them in prison, yet he did not mean to do them any real harm, says, on dismissing them, "*I fear God, and therefore you shall live.*" In the same way, when Abraham had desired Sara to conceal their relationship of man and wife out of fear of Abimelech, he gave as the reason of his perception of danger, "Perhaps there is not the fear of God in this place" (Gen. xx. 11). The Scripture, describing Job, speaks of him as an upright man, "fearing God;" and even God Himself, in pointing Job out to Satan, says, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is not a man like him on the earth—simple, upright, "fearing God," and departing from evil?" And in the Book of Psalms, the climax in the description of the wicked is, "There is no fear of God before their eyes"

(Psalm xiii. 8). Cornelius, the centurion, is described by the Evangelist as a religious man, and "fearing God" (Acts x. 2). And the unjust judge in the city is described by our Lord as "one who did not fear God" (Luke xviii. 2). Again, when the penitent thief on the Cross reproached his companion for his railing, he said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" And in the Book of Daniel, in like manner, Azarias in the midst of the furnace, having amply confessed the sins of his people, says, "But now we follow Thee with our whole heart, and we *fear Thee*."

Thus, according to the unvarying tradition of the people of God, the right attitude of the human soul in its fallen state towards God is the "Fear of God." And with this perfectly agree the words of all the great teachers in the Sacred Scriptures. Thus the books of Job, of the Psalms, of the Proverbs, and of Ecclesiasticus, all unite in saying that the "Fear of God" is the beginning of wisdom. (Job xxviii. 28, Psalm cx. 10, Prov. i. 7, Eccclus. i. 16.)

“Come ye children, listen to me,” says the Psalmist, speaking in the person of the Church, “I will teach you the fear of the Lord” (Psalm xxxiii. 12). The wise king says the “Fear of the Lord is the fountain of life” (Prov. xiv. 27); and all doctrine is to be summed up in it. “Let us all hear the end of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man” (Eccles. xii. 13). “There is nothing better,” says the son of Sirach, “than the fear of God” (Ecclus. xxiii. 37). “Blessed is the man to whom it has been given to have the fear of God” (Ecclus. xxv. 15). “The fear of the Lord is, as it were, a paradise of benedictions” (Ecclus. xl. 28). And that which is the doctrine of the inspired teachers of men on earth we find re-echoed in Heaven itself. “I saw,” says the prophet, in his vision, “another angel flying through the middle of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, that he might preach to them that sit on the earth, saying, ‘Fear the Lord, and give Him honour’” (Apoc. xiv. 7). And the language in heaven of those who sing

the Canticle of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb, is—"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord" (Apoc. xv. 4).

We do not need to multiply further proofs from the Sacred Scriptures, which it would be by no means difficult to do, to establish the truth on which we are insisting, that the "Fear of God" is at once the most indispensable and, at the same time, the most elementary lesson in religion which every soul of man has to learn. The Great Christian Mother's example to her children consequently, having above all things in view not only what her children need most to learn, but likewise what their infirm capacities best enable them to digest to their profit, will, we may be sure beforehand, be in a most signal and memorable manner an example of the fear of God. The Holy Mother, to whom the eyes of her children in Christ are turned from every corner of the globe, will be certain from the first moment of her coming to be known to them to place before them the perfect pattern of that which is their first and their greatest need, namely, that they should

be taught by her example the “Fear of the Lord.”

Let us proceed, then, to the nearer study of what her example in this respect really is.

The “Fear of the Lord,” or, as we may say in other words, docility to the promptings of the holy Spirit of the fear of the Lord, is shown in practice in the perfect fulfilment of all our obligations to God, whether these arise directly out of His laws, requiring from us the performance of such and such actions and the abstaining from such others, or whether they are such as we may contract of our free will towards Him, not being obliged thereto by any direct command contained in His law. Of an obligation of this latter kind, the Scripture says, “When thou shalt have made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to perform it; for the Lord thy God will require it of thee; and if thou shalt delay, it shall be reputed to thee as sin” (Deut. xxiii. 21). And the wise king says, “If thou hast vowed anything to the Lord thy God, delay not to pay it, for a faithless and foolish promise is displeasing to

Him. It is far better not to vow, than, after having vowed, not to pay that which has been promised " (Eccles. v. 4). Such, then, was the Divine will with reference to a vow made to God; and the Mother whom God has given to the Christian family was one who had thus bound herself of her own free will by the vow of perpetual virginity.

And now, as to the example of perfect docility to the holy Spirit of the "Fear of the Lord," which she who has thus bound herself is to be seen to set before her children for their instruction. Of course, there can be no room for doubt but that this holy Spirit can give no other suggestion than that a sacred vow thus made must be faithfully kept. No matter how overwhelming may be the inducements that would suggest its being broken, the inward voice of this holy Spirit will say, "Look neither on the right hand nor on the left, but with the fear of God before your eyes, truly and faithfully keep the holy promise you have made."

The holy Archangel, who has been sent to

Mary, proceeds to unfold the purport of the message which he is commissioned from God to deliver. “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; and God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign in the House of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Here, in order rightly to appreciate the example which our Mother sets before us, we should certainly pause to contemplate the indescribably attractive prospect that Mary would now perceive to be placed before her. It was proposed to her to become nothing less than the queen-mother of the king of her people. All the long-forgotten glories of her family are to be revived in her. Her promised son is to sit on the throne of His father David. He is to reign in the House of Jacob, and to possess a kingdom without limit or end. This to Mary, it must be considered, was no unknown or unheard-of prospect in itself, but rather, in a certain way, it was the darling hope of every

Israelite maiden that perchance she might be the one chosen to be united to God in the fulfilment of His promises to the House of Israel. The servant of God to whom she is espoused, is likewise of the house and lineage of David, and the message of the Angel appears to be that the promise is to be accomplished in the ordinary way of nature, on the same conditions as those on which Isaac was promised to Abraham and Sara, "life accompanying." But there stands in the way the contrary vow of perpetual virginity. To all apparent seeming, then, if the vow is to be faithfully observed, there is no known alternative open but to renounce the prospect, with all its incalculable attractions and charms. There is, indeed, abundant room for special pleading in favour of accepting the prospect, for it is obviously open to infer, from the very coming of so high and exalted a messenger, that there is a purpose in the counsels of God to be accomplished, which might justly overrule any ordinary obstacle that would appear to stand in the way of its realisation. But against any such reasoning

as this stands the clear contrary suggestion of the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord: “If thou hast vowed the vow of virginity to the Lord,” cries the plain voice of this holy Spirit, “pay thy vow unto the Most High” (Psalm xlix. 14). Docile, then, to the voice of this holy Spirit within her, and wholly unmoved by the dazzling grandeur of the prospect laid before her, Mary calmly replies to the Angel, “How shall these things be, seeing I know not man?”

It will not be necessary here to enlarge upon that which followed on this reply, of which no Christian can easily be supposed to be ignorant, namely, that by a singular privilege, of which there is no other example known, it was granted to Mary, in reward of her docility to the holy Spirit of the Fear of the Lord, to remain faithful to her vow, and yet not to forfeit a single tittle of the marvellous prospect placed before her.

Suffice it, then, here to say, that as God bore testimony to Abraham—“Now I know that thou fearest God, and thou hast not spared thine only son for My sake” (Gen. xxii. 12),—so henceforward may the same testimony be

given of the Great Mother of the Christian family. Now may all generations know that she was one so entirely possessed by the Spirit of the fear of the Lord, so perfectly docile to His Divine promptings, that it was not in the power of any prospect, how dazzling soever it might be, to draw her aside from the path to which she was bound by her vow. Now may all ages rejoice to know that no consent on her part, to that which was laid before her, could be obtained until she first had the needful assurance given to her by the heavenly messenger that her acceptance of it brought with it no prejudice to the integrity of her holy promise to God. This holy Spirit of the "Fear of the Lord," which is thus seen to preside over her Maternity in its first beginnings, also abode with her to the end. We find her equally docile to its promptings when, standing by the Cross of her Son, and overcoming all the agonising human grief of the mother, like faithful Abraham, she would not have the life even of her most beloved only Son spared, because it was the Divine Will that, by the sacrifice of

His life, the life of the lost world should be redeemed.

God is thus found to be faithful to His people, for He gives them for a Mother one who sets before all her innumerable children the perfect example of that which is the first and foremost of the lessons in religion which they need to be taught—namely, docility and obedience to the

“**HOLY SPIRIT OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD.**”

DISCOURSE THE FOURTH.

The Second Gift of the Holy Ghost.—The Spirit of Piety, and how the Elect Mother of the Christian family exemplifies this Spirit for the guidance of her children.

“THOU shalt send forth Thy Spirit,” says the Sacred Scripture, “and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth” (Psalm ciii. 30). There is nothing abstruse or concealed in the remedy which the earth needs for its renewal, after its fall from the innocence in which it was created. It is only necessary that all men should enter into the Divine Covenant of Redemption offered to them in Jesus Christ, and that, within this Covenant, they should be docile and obedient to the several promptings of the Holy Spirit of God, who is sent forth to work amongst them. To form some notion of the efficacy of the remedy which the wisdom of God has herein provided, let us but for a short moment suppose that all the

children of the great Christian family have shown themselves reasonably and affectionately solicitous to take pattern by the example their great Mother has given them, in the one particular only of which we have briefly treated—namely, docility to the holy “Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.” This, we should not omit to observe by the way, is no extreme supposition, for it does but assume that the children of the Christian family have learned from their elect Mother’s example the first elementary lesson that children are required to learn. Yet how wonderful would be the renewal of the face of the earth that could not fail to flow from this one thing alone!

In the first place, the Ten Commandments of God, given to Moses, would be taken as the foundation of all the various Christian States and their Governments. The due observance of the Divine law of the Sabbath or seventh day would be everywhere confirmed by civil legislation. Serious crimes against the laws of God and man would be unknown, for “the Fear of God expels sin.” Justice between man and

man would be established, and the due discharge of all the various family, social, and public duties—of the neglect and perversion of which God is known to be the avenger—would be provided for and ensured. Even in the above extremely few words, we have quite enough to enable us to perceive how, by the operation of this one gift alone of the “Spirit of the Fear of the Lord,” not less than a universal renewal of the face of the whole earth is provided for. Yet we have here, as who can fail to see, a mere picture in faint outline, of the riches of the renewal which ought to flow from the single operation in the Christian society of this one Spirit of the Fear of God.

That such a renewal, then, has largely taken effect in past times, and is even now in daily operation in the Christian nations, is matter of deep thankfulness to God, the giver of every good and perfect gift; but that it should fail of its effect, where it does fail, proves nothing against the efficacy of the remedy. It only shows how terribly it is in the power of Christian men to fight against God and to resist the Holy

Ghost. It only shows how the example of the perfect and loving Mother may be thrown away upon the blind and perverse children. "Mine eyes," says the holy Psalmist, "have failed through weeping, because men do not keep Thy commandments" (Psalm c. 8).

"However, God," says the Scripture, "has made all things for Himself, even the impious man for the evil day" (Prov. xvi. 4). Even the lost and perverse children of a household are appointed to render a certain service to the good and the docile. They fill these latter with a holy zeal, to study with increased courage to make amends in their greater docility, for the injury done by their perverse brethren to the parental love and tenderness which, up to the last dread moment of eternal reprobation, watches with unabated solicitude over all. But let this much suffice as regards the perverse children of the Christian household. We must proceed with our subject—viz., the example which our great Mother in Christ places before us, in respect of the second gift of the Holy Ghost, the SPIRIT OF PIETY.

As the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord leads us to the obedience due to God as a Supreme Legislator and Ruler, and likewise to the deep care and solicitude with which we should prepare to appear before Him as the Judge, on whose award will depend our condition for eternity; so, lest the salutary and wholesome fear thus inspired should degenerate into a superstitious and terror-stricken servility, as also to bring the society of the earth into a nearer resemblance to the love and charity of Heaven, we stand in need of another holy gift, in the strength of which we may be able to say to God—"Our Father who art in Heaven!" And this is the second gift of the Holy Ghost, the SPIRIT OF PIETY.

The words of S. Thomas are as follows:—
"The gifts of the Holy Ghost are certain habitual dispositions of the soul, by which it is promptly moved by the Holy Ghost. Amongst other things, the Holy Ghost moves us to this, that we should have a certain filial affection to God, according to the Apostle's words: 'You have received the Spirit of adoption, by which

we cry “Abba, Father’” (Rom. viii.). And because it properly appertains to piety to show due honour and duty to a father, it follows that piety, according to which we give honour and worship to God as to a father, through the prompting of the Holy Ghost, is a gift of the Holy Ghost.”

But in the same manner as the “Spirit of the Fear of the Lord” leads us to submission not only to the laws of God, but likewise also, as the Apostle insists, “to every ordinance of man, for Christ’s sake;” so the Spirit of Piety leads not only to the filial reverence and piety that is due to God as to a father, but also to all the affection and gentle regard that is either due or becoming from us towards our fellow-man, made in the image of God—and this, according to all the various ties by which human society is bound together, whether of kindred, relationship, fellow-citizenship, neighbourhood and the like. The Christian doctrine is, that we should aim at perfection, after the pattern of God Himself, and strive, as our Lord says, “to be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is per-

fect." But piety towards men is part of the perfect attributes of God, as the letter of Ezechias assures the people of Israel: "For the Lord your God is pious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if you return to Him" (2 Par. xxx. 9). The operation of the "Holy Spirit of Piety" will, consequently, lead us, first and foremost, to the filial love and regard that is due from us to God as our Father in Heaven; and, as it were, by the overflow of its riches, it will, after this, lead us to all that is dutiful, loving, affectionate and considerate to our fellow-men, in all the various relations of life in which we can stand towards them.

We have already said we do not expect a mother's example to be otherwise than perfectly homely, sensible and level to the capacities of her children, in such a way as that no other example is at all likely to be so easily understood and imitated by her children. The mother's example excludes, we may perhaps not be able with propriety to use the word "nonsense," but certainly everything in the

remotest manner savouring of parade or ostentation ; so that while it remains plainness and simplicity itself, nothing can be conceived better suited and more likely to be useful for the children than their mother's example. This is a truth we must never tire of repeating, and we cannot in consequence but be greatly pleased to find that such is exactly the example of the great Mother of the Christian family as regards the second gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Piety. We shall at once easily see that it is characterised by all the plainness and simplicity that so well becomes the tender mother, who studies above all things her children's ability to profit by her example, at the same time that nothing can be conceived better suited to inspire us with the affectionate desire to profit and take pattern by it.

Piety towards God, then, may without difficulty be perceived to take three ordinary and familiar ways of manifesting itself in the common life of the great multitude of the Christian family.

These three ways are:—(1.) The worship of

the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the Christian temples; (2.) The special love and adoration of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity present in the holy tabernacle of the Christian temples; and (3.) Pious solicitude for the things of God, and their well-being. There never can be imagined a time when the Spirit of Piety, animating the vast multitudes of the Christian people, has not continually filled the temples and sanctuaries of the Church with devout multitudes worshipping the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity; has not continually brought these multitudes to bend their knees in worship and adoration of the Divine Presence of God the Son in the holy tabernacle of these sanctuaries; and, lastly, when it has not filled their hearts and minds with such pious solicitude for the things of God and the honour of His Saints, so that they have cheerfully laid their riches and treasures at the feet of His servants, to build His sanctuaries and furnish all things appertaining to them—when it has not moved them to give their sons and their daughters, and

not unfrequently themselves also, to put on the holy habit of His religion, and to become His servants. We certainly, then, could not conceive the great Mother of the Christian family being wanting to her children in failing to put before them the light of her maternal example, in respect of these universal manifestations of the Holy Spirit of Piety. Let us proceed to see what her example was in this respect.

The effect of our Lord's words to the woman of Samaria, "The hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father" (John iv. 21), has been that, in the Christian Covenant, sanctuaries for Divine worship have overspread the earth; and with this wonderful multiplication of temples has arisen a corresponding increase of the duty on the part of the Christians of assembling themselves in them for sacrifice and Divine worship. "Going to church," in consequence, becomes an ordinary part of the life of all the faithful; and while the laws of the Church impose upon the faithful the duty of being present in the church on certain days, a very

great deal is also left perfectly free to the prompting of individual personal piety and love of religion. The duty of going to church at stated times is indeed created by the Divine law, and does not simply spring from the Spirit of Piety, but the movement of this holy Spirit within us ever prompts us to the glad and joyful fulfilment of the duty; and it was certainly this holy Spirit that spoke in the mouth of David, when he uttered the words: "I was glad when they said to me, We will go into the house of the Lord."

The ordinary condition of life, in respect of the public worship of God, was so very different in the time in which the Blessed Virgin lived, that it is only with great difficulty that we can picture it to ourselves. God had then but one temple only, where sacrifices were offered; and the Divine law required no more onerous duty than the being present for public worship, at these sacrifices, at three seasons of the year; and then this law affected only the adult male population. Women and children were exempt, and though not prohibited, if they came, they came led by the

Spirit of Piety. S. Luke, then, informs us : “ His parents went every year to Jerusalem on the solemn day of the Pasch.” The example, then, of the great Mother of the Christian family is thus a true church-going example. Animated by the holy Spirit of Piety, and not under any constraint from the law, she is seen to undertake every year a three days’ journey, as we should say, to be present at church. But if, as it is written in the Sacred Scripture, “ My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people,” the example of the great Mother of the Christian family, we may be sure, is an example not only of the holy Spirit of Piety as prompting the willing and joyful frequenting of the material temple, but in an equal degree likewise of the holy Spirit of Piety pouring itself out in the humble prayer and pious supplication, which befits the sacred courts of “ the house of prayer for all people.” S. Luke, indeed, gives us a special record of this holy Spirit of Prayer as exemplified by the Blessed Virgin, as we shall presently see more at length, when we shall have occasion to refer to his

narrative relating the events that immediately followed our Lord's ascension into heaven.

But, further, the Christian sanctuaries which we frequent for public worship possess what was not given to the Mosaic Covenant—namely, the perpetual Divine Presence residing in the holy tabernacle. This perpetual presence of God with His people in the Christian sanctuaries, as need not here be insisted upon, holds a most important place in the economy of the Divine plan for the recovery of fallen man. By means of it, the present life is enabled to become to the Christian people a school of preparation for the future life ; and what we may now learn by the approach to our God, veiled as He is from our sight by the Sacrament of the Altar, we may hope to profit by in the future life, when the veil is withdrawn. Here, however, we must not omit to observe that all the various devout practices of visiting our Lord, thus present with us in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, from which so great advantages are to be reaped, by no means fall under the binding obligation of any law, but are left entirely open to the free

promptings of the holy Spirit of Piety. Great and numerous as are the graces that flow from such pious visits, it is the holy Spirit of Piety alone that suggests these visits to the Christian people. It is wholly left to the promptings of this holy Spirit to move the Christian people to repair to the holy tabernacle, there to seek these promised graces and there to adore the Divine Presence which deigns to dwell in it.

Let us then proceed to study our great Mother's example in this respect. Of course, there are circumstances in her example for which our condition can have no literal parallel. With her, the love of the mother for an only son coincided with the adoration of the human creature, acknowledging the near presence of her God; and to her the Sacred Humanity was the veil of the Godhead, whereas to us the veil is the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. But, taking these points of difference into account, what is our great Mother's example? We see her using her maternal authority, and calling the Divine Presence away from the temple of her nation and people, to come to be the light and

joy of her own humble dwelling in Nazareth. The great Mother of the Christian family sets us the example of one who could not live separated by distance from this gracious Divine Presence, and certainly if we her children study to conform ourselves to her maternal example, we shall not fail to use every effort in our power to make the pious practice of visiting the same Divine Presence, which was her joy, form an indispensable part of our own daily life.

Lastly, we have to study the example of our great Mother as regards the third universal manifestation of the Spirit of Piety—namely, personal zeal and solicitude for the things of God.

S. Luke enumerates the names of the Apostles to whose abode in Jerusalem those who returned from witnessing the Ascension of Jesus into heaven went up, and the Evangelist adds, “that all these continued persevering in one mind in prayer with the holy women, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and His brethren.” Here are indeed but brief words, yet what a

picture do not they present? Here we have the life of daily solicitude for the things of God, of which Mary, the mother of Jesus, is, as it were, the centre and the warmth. That it was a practical and vigilant solicitude for the things of God and of preparation for their future work, combined with perseverance in prayer, that formed their life, is shown by the circumstance, falling in this time, of the election by lot of S. Matthias to succeed to the Apostolic ministry from which Judas had fallen. Of this vigilant solicitude for the things of God, who can fail to gather, from S. Luke's words, that Mary's persevering Spirit of Piety must have been the life and the light.

And, in conclusion, from the holy Spirit of Piety towards God extending itself to all the things appertaining to His worship and service, there is also a rich overflow that reaches to men made in the image of God. And while this overflow touches in the first place the near ties and relationships of kindred and family, becoming a spirit of Christian love and affection, knitting together the human race in all

its various ties of kindred and family, it is not by any exclusive narrowness tied to mere kindred and relationship. Of this large expansive Spirit of Piety, we have recorded a beautiful example of our great Mother. When she was invited, with her Son, to a wedding feast at a neighbouring village, she was the first to perceive and feel for the embarrassment and distress of her hospitable entertainers, caused by the supply of wine for the guests having run short. This could not exactly be called an appalling calamity, but it was nevertheless one of the numerous minor events in ordinary life calculated to cause very considerable and serious mortification, and it is just one of those occasions when the true Spirit of Piety towards our fellows would be sure to call forth the utmost promptitude of endeavour to save, if possible, kind and hospitable entertainers from the distressing mortification of the failure of their supply coming to be discovered. Such is precisely the example of our great Mother. The Evangelist relates that Mary keenly feels for their distress, and at once perceives what

alone can save her friends, and she goes straight to Jesus to let Him know the predicament. "The mother of Jesus," writes S. John, "says to Him, 'They have no wine.'" Her timely interposition, thus dictated by the Spirit of Piety to her kind entertainers, succeeds in saving them from the impending mortification, and even earned for the bridegroom the honourable testimony of the master of the feast: "Thou hast kept the good wine until now."

What a beautiful example the children of the Christian family have here to take pattern by, as regards all the various relations of their life on earth one with another.

Our great Mother in Christ is then seen fully to exemplify for her children the second gift of the Holy Ghost—"The Spirit of Piety"—(1.) In respect of the love for frequenting the public worship of God in His temple, and for pouring out humble prayer and supplication before Him. (2.) Of the devout confession and adoration of His sacramental presence in the holy tabernacle. (3.) Of pious solicitude

for the things of God ; and, lastly, in all kind and merciful thought and consideration for our fellow-men ; showing us by her own example what should be the effect of this Holy Spirit upon us in the moulding and forming the relations in which we stand to God and to our fellow-men.

DISCOURSE THE FIFTH.

The third Gift of the Holy Ghost.—The Spirit of Knowledge, and how the great Mother of the Christian family exemplifies this Gift for the guidance of her children.

LET us suppose ourselves to be listening to a thoughtful and prudent father who speaks to his son in the following words: “ My dear boy, I am very happy indeed to see that you always show yourself so dutiful and affectionate a child to your father and mother, and I bless God that He has given you this good spirit of duty and love to your parents; but you cannot understand too soon that you have the prospect before you to make your own way in the world for yourself. I wish, therefore, to see you showing yourself just as diligent and earnest now in acquiring all the good and useful knowledge that you will need in your after life, as, I thank God for it, you are dutiful and affectionate towards myself and your mother. You must

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not fail to know, my dear boy, that the first law of God for the human family which He has created and placed on this earth is labour. He said to them, 'Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and *subdue it*.' Now labour, without the knowledge and understanding necessary to direct it, can avail nothing worth speaking of in the way of subduing the earth. The wild and savage people, of whom there are still great numbers in various parts of the earth, frequently labour exceedingly hard in their hunting and in their pursuit of the wild beasts and fish that serve them as food, and yet they cannot be said to 'subdue the earth,' for they have wandered away, and have broken themselves off from intercourse and society with the nations and people who cultivate the sciences and the arts of life, and, having thus lost the knowledge which is necessary to form and direct labour, their way of life has become, what we see it to be, wofully fallen from the dignity of human life which God intended, and sunk into a condition in which they are veritable objects of pity.

“The difference between the savage man, such as are the Red Indians of the prairies of North America and many other similar people in other parts of the earth, and the civilised man, such as he is found among the European nations, is that among the civilised men knowledge is studied and cultivated, and perpetuated by means of schools and similar institutions and their teachers. This is needed for the directing that daily labour by which the earth, according to the will of the Divine Creator, is to be subdued to the wants of men, who have been formed, by the providence of God, into the different nations and people that now divide the earth amongst them and possess it. Whereas, the savage man, having broken away from the means necessary to acquire the knowledge by which labour must always need to be directed, has come into the terribly abject and degraded condition which ought to be our warning.

“See, then, my dear child, the importance of your being diligent in acquiring and in daily adding to your store of the knowledge which is

to direct and form the labour and industry of your life. By this it is that you are to fulfil the first commandment of God, which is to 'subdue the earth,' and by this it is that you have to earn an honest subsistence for yourself, and an honourable rank in the society and place of abode in which your lot may be cast by the good providence of God.

"There is, no doubt, as I need not here specially insist, a great deal of human knowledge that may be justly called useless and impertinent, as there is likewise the knowledge of vice and crime, which is worse than useless—positively bad, and to be avoided; except where, in order to the office of the magistrate or physician who has to apply the remedy, there must be an adequate knowledge of that to which the remedies have to be applied. In knowledge, as in all other things belonging to our world, we must bear in mind the words of the prophet foretelling of Christ, 'Butter and honey shall He eat that He may know how to choose the good and reject the evil——.' Moreover, the revelation that has been made to

us of a future life by Jesus Christ, does not (except to those who may receive some special call to serve God in one or other of the various offices of His Church—and then those so called do but substitute one kind of labour for another) cancel the ordinary condition of life, which remains substantially what it has ever been from the beginning—namely, a state of active and intelligent labour in subduing the earth for the purposes of man. It introduces, indeed, and makes room for the worship of God, to which in a special manner it appropriates every seventh and certain other festival days, on all of which it requires that all such labour as is justly reputed servile should be suspended, in order that all may have their time free for the public worship of God, and for otherwise sanctifying the day; but after this it leaves the original command, ‘to subdue the earth,’ in its full force. ‘Six days shalt thou labour,’ are the words of the command given to Moses.

“You may thus see then, my dear boy, that I cannot have sufficient ground to be fully satis-

fied with you solely because you are a dutiful and affectionate child to me. I wish you, both for your own sake and mine, to approve yourself as a patient, active, and intelligent student in acquiring the knowledge necessary for your future life."

Who is there, we may ask, who could refuse full and perfect praise to any father who might be heard to speak in the manner above described to his son? Who can for a moment doubt the solid importance of the knowledge which is to be the guide and director of that labour of a whole life which is required in consequence of the Divine command to subdue the earth; to be destitute of which knowledge, be it always remembered, is to fall into the degraded condition of the untutored savage?

Now, the voice of the earthly parent thus speaking to his child is, in the above respect, but the mirror in which we may see reflected the mind of the Heavenly Father of all towards the children of His family upon earth.

It is His good pleasure that they should all be able to look up to Him, and to love Him as

a Father; and that they may be able to do this, He gives them, as we have seen, the second gift of the Holy Ghost, the *Spirit of Piety*. But He has nowhere revoked for the Christian people His words spoken in the beginning for all times and generations, "Increase and multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it." Rather in order that the Christian people may be able the better to subdue the earth as becomes Christians, He gives them the third gift of the Holy Ghost, the *Spirit of Knowledge*.

God is spoken of in the Psalms as "one who teaches man knowledge" (Ps. xciii. 10), and if knowledge is of such importance to the life of men that God Himself condescends to become the teacher of knowledge, it is not to be supposed that we can be left under any uncertainty as to the mind of God with reference to the knowledge that properly belongs to the life of men.

S. Thomas says "that God in the beginning did not create the works of His creation that they might simply exist in themselves, but that

they might be the fountain of being to others, and, therefore, they were created in the perfect state. Adam was consequently brought into being, not only perfect bodily, but also as regards the gifts of the mind, that he might be at once able to instruct and govern others, a thing which cannot be done without knowledge. He was, therefore, taught in such a manner by God as that he possessed the knowledge of all the things in which man, according to his nature, requires instruction.

“And again, in order to the good government of a man’s own life and also that of others, not only is there need for the knowledge of all that can be known naturally, but also for an order of knowledge that surpasses the ordinary condition of nature, just as in our case we need the knowledge of faith for the right government of our own lives. Adam, therefore, received all such knowledge of this kind as was necessary for the government of human life in the state in which it was created.”

Adam, then, the first man, created by God as the beginning and the pattern for the whole

human family which is to come from him, receives from God an ample and full endowment of the knowledge which is necessary for the government of his own life and that of the society to spring from him, and for its due instruction in knowledge. God is, then, not only the author of being to the human creation, but the teacher to it of the knowledge that is necessary for its well-being.

Adam's descendants all necessarily differ from him in respect of the state of infancy, childhood, and youth, through which they are all appointed to pass, and during which it is provided that, by their own labour, aided and directed by the instruction which they receive from those older than themselves, they have to attain to their measure of the knowledge which Adam himself received directly from the instruction of God. And as the second Adam differs from the first in this very respect—namely, that He did pass through the states of infancy, childhood, and youth up to manhood, so He has supplied the pattern which Adam could not give of the right use of the state of

youth, as the time for advancement and progress in the knowledge that is required for the perfect condition of manhood. For "Jesus," says S. Luke, "advanced in wisdom and age, and in favour with God and men" (Luke ii. 52).

But S. Paul says, "One star differeth from another in magnitude." The measure of knowledge proper for human life is subject to an immense diversity, according to the almost endless varieties of the conditions of life and their occupations. "With what wisdom," says the sacred writer, "shall he be filled who holdeth the plough, who glorieth in the goad, driveth the oxen therewith, and is employed with their works, and all whose talk is of bullocks" (Ecclus. xxx. 8).

One consequence of this endless diversity of conditions is that human knowledge becomes marvellously increased, and as S. Augustine says, "bears witness that there is, in consequence of the fall, a great deal of vain superfluity and noxious curiosity in what may be known by man." S. Peter, therefore, to meet this, lays down the rule for Christians

that, "While they must be diligent to add knowledge to their faith, they must also minister abstinence in their knowledge" (2 Peter i. 6)—that is to say, that while the knowledge that is good must be diligently cultivated, the knowledge that is bad must be as carefully avoided.

But if the natural life of man gives birth to an endless diversity of knowledge, which by its extent and variety vastly exceeds the limited capacity of any individual men, rendering it necessary for them to restrict their pursuit of knowledge to the particular branches and kinds proper to their condition, or those of which they may make a reasonable and prudent choice, there is one branch of knowledge that is common to both sexes and to all ages and conditions of human life, wherever found, in its proper measure and degree. This is the knowledge of God and of His works as revealed and made known in the volume of the Sacred Scriptures.

The sacred writer already quoted, speaking of the condition of the vast multitude of people

who live by the labour of their various callings, in obedience to the order of God appointing men to "subdue the earth," says of them, "They shall not sit in the seat of the judge; they shall not teach and give judgment in public; but they shall strengthen the state of the world; their prayer shall be in the plying of their art, contenting their soul, and studying in the law of the Most High" (Ecclus. xxxviii. 38). God the Most High is the common Father of all, and in the law of God is contained the knowledge in which all alike, according to the degree and measure of their conditions and capacity, are called and invited to share, and in which all, in their respective degrees, reap the benefits and blessings attached to its acquisition.

The Mother of the Christian family, then, while she cannot be expected to give the weight of her great example to any one particular branch among the numerous diversities of the knowledge that is needed to subdue the earth, to the prejudice of others equally good and honourable, may be expected to set before her

children the example of the third gift of the Holy Ghost, animating, guiding, and directing her in the acquisition and use of that branch of knowledge which is the gift of God to every condition of life, and the common prerogative of all people and nations; that is, the knowledge of God contained in the Sacred Scriptures.

In what manner the Mother of the Christian family gives her example in this important respect, we must proceed to inquire.

We have now learned briefly, that the knowledge necessary for subduing the earth to the purposes of men is, by the will of God, a thing indispensable to the life of men. Indeed, so indispensable is this knowledge, that God did not only deign to take upon Himself to be its first teacher, but has not failed to annex to the breaking away from the schools in which this knowledge must, in the nature of things, be perpetuated by its proper teachers, a most terrible penalty. Human life, separated from this knowledge, falls from the state of civilisation into the degraded condition of the savage man, such as he is found at this day in the

forests and prairies of North and South America, the African Continent, and elsewhere.

It is, however, not enough for each man by himself to possess the knowledge required for subduing the earth, and nothing more. By the virtue of the Divine blessing on the human creation, men were to multiply and to fill the earth. The fruit of this multiplication is the need, which appertains to and springs out of their nature, to live in a well-ordered society together, one with another.

But to the right ordering of this society the knowledge of God is indispensable. It is not merely becoming, on grounds of reason, that a creature made in the likeness and the image of his Maker, who is God, should be taught his due measure of the knowledge of the God who made him ; but this knowledge is actually so indispensable to the formation and preservation of the social order, in which the human family, when multiplied, naturally and properly seek to live, that without it they cannot possibly have either the personal happiness or the social well-being proper to their nature.

The human creation, multiplied and spread over the earth in its various families, requires to know God (1st) as the Divine Source of the power which is needed for the government of their society; (2ndly) as the Divine Origin of the laws, according to which their life is ordered; (3rdly) as the Divine Fountain of their sense of right and wrong, by which their words and dealings one with another are regulated; (4thly) as the Supreme Judge, to whose judgment every one knows himself to be accountable for his actions, and who is also frequently seen, in the present life, to give such visible effect to His judgments as is proper to maintain His fear amongst men.

Without this knowledge of God, no society amongst men can have any other than a short-lived existence, in which it has to progress from bad to worse, until it ends in the anarchy in which every one is at war with his neighbour, and all labour is limited to that which destroys. "Vain are all men," says the inspired writer, "in whom there is no foundation of the knowledge of God" (Wisdom xiii. 1).

God having given to man his being, man can only live in society where he knows and fears God, and is subject to Him. Then God blesses and upholds him in his social and political being. "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, he that keepeth it watcheth but in vain" (Ps. cxxvi.).

All experience goes to show that no lasting social life of men on earth is possible apart from the knowledge of God. This knowledge, consequently, has to be perpetuated by being taught in its proper schools, the living generation passing it on to that which is rising up, and this under the inevitable penalty of the future ruin of the society which neglects to do this. Barbarism and savage life is the inevitable penalty of not preserving the knowledge required for subduing the earth; and when to this is superadded, as appears to be always the case, loss of the knowledge of God, barbarism becomes then complete, and falls to its lowest possible depth.

But God did not create man a little lower

than the angels for no other end than that he should acquire and use knowledge in subduing the earth. The labour of subduing the earth was not to last beyond a certain term. The plan of God for His human creation, provided from the beginning that a promotion to a higher and more honourable order of life should succeed to the term spent in the labours of subduing the earth. In the beginning, consequently, the knowledge of God would necessarily comprise the knowledge of this intended promotion, and of the service of religious worship connected with it.

But then there quickly came to disturb this order the sin of Adam and Eve, followed by its penalty of death, to which all are subject. Out of this sin sprang the necessity for the work of God the Redeemer, in order that the original Divine plan of the promotion of man to a higher and better life, after his appointed term in this life is over, might not be frustrated.

From this time forward, in addition to the knowledge of God, which was as indispensable before Adam's sin as it has continued to be

after, it became necessary to superadd the knowledge of the work of God the Redeemer, in proportion as this knowledge was gradually revealed; not omitting, also, to accumulate and preserve the further knowledge which it pleased God to make known to His creatures respecting Himself, in the various acts of His general providence and government over the world which He had created.

The first great universal apostasy of men from God, and their rejection of His knowledge, was punished by the waters of the Deluge. And that a new generation might people the earth, preserving this knowledge and perpetuating it, the family of a priest and a preacher of justice alone was preserved from the Deluge; and God blessed this family, and bid it to increase, that it might multiply and fill the earth with a succession of generations preserving the knowledge of God, and transmitting it, by the necessary teaching, to those who rose up to take their places.

But when this knowledge was again no longer faithfully taught, God made choice of the

patriarch Abraham, called him away from his kindred, obliged him to live the life of a pilgrim on the earth, and promised to make a great nation of his seed, who were to possess the land in which he wandered about as a stranger, adding, that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in his seed.

This promise of God did not begin to receive signs of its fulfilment until several hundred years afterwards, in the time and through the ministry of the prophet Moses. The children of Israel, now greatly increased, were delivered by a series of miracles out of their servitude in Egypt, in order that they might be entrusted with a large accession of the "knowledge of God," and be made the keepers and depositaries of this knowledge, under the strictest obligation that the existing generation should carefully teach it to the generation that was rising up. The injunction of Moses in this respect deserves to be most attentively studied. "Keep thyself, therefore, and thy soul most carefully," says Moses to his people; "do not forget the words which thine eyes have seen, and let them

not fall out of thine heart all the days of thy life. *Thou shalt teach them to thy children and to thy grandchildren.* From the day in which thou didst stand before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord thy God spake to me, saying, ‘Gather the people together to Me that they may hear My words and may learn to fear Me all the time they live on the earth, *and may teach their children*’ ” (Deut. iv. 9, 10).

It is not to be passed over here that Moses by no means understands that he is here taking measures proper only to secure the formation of a people that is to be distinguished for their piety. He tells his people that he is laying the foundation for their knowledge and understanding, which is to challenge the admiration of all the people of the earth. He says to them, “This is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of all people, that hearing of all these precepts, they may say, ‘Behold a wise and an understanding people, a mighty nation’ ” (Deut. iv. 6).

Centuries after the time of Moses, during the whole course of which this nation of Israel

had never been without the continual experience of the government of God over them, and had been made the depository of much additional knowledge of God, we have their prophet, Baruch, addressing them these remarkable words, in their captivity in Babylon:

“Why is it, O Israel, that thou art in the land of thine enemies, that thou hast grown old in a land that is not thine, that thou hast been defiled with the dead, and art numbered with them that go down to the pit? *Thou hast left the fountain of Wisdom.* For if thou wouldst have walked in the way of God, of a truth thou wouldst have dwelt in everlasting peace. Learn thou where is prudence, where is virtue, where is understanding, that thou mayest know also where is length of days and abundance, where is the light of the eyes and peace.” The prophet then goes on to pass in review the neighbouring people, and says: “Wisdom has not been heard of in the land of Canaan, and has not been seen in Theman. The sons of Agar also, that search after the wisdom that is of the earth, the merchants of Merrha and of Theman,

the tellers of fables and searchers of prudence and understanding, all these have not known the way of Wisdom, neither have they remembered her paths. . . . The Lord hath not chosen such as these, they have not found the way of learning, and therefore they have perished. . . . He alone who knoweth all things, hath known Wisdom, and hath found her out by His understanding. He, namely, who made the earth in His eternity, and filled it with cattle and four-footed beasts. . . He is our God, and there shall be no other accounted of in comparison with Him. He hath found out the way of knowledge, *and hath given it to Jacob His servant, and to Israel His beloved*" (Baruch iii. 10, &c.).

Of this knowledge, which God gave to the people of Israel, we distinctly learn that it was not given as the prerogative of the chosen few, but as the gift of God without respect of persons, for the universal benefit and good of all, for the wise and the simple, for the learned and the unlearned; to each, however, in their respective measure and degree. "The proverbs

of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel," declare themselves to be "for the knowledge of wisdom and learning;" but also to give "subtlety to the little ones, to the young men knowledge and understanding." "The wise man," says Solomon, "that heareth these things shall become still wiser, and he that understandeth them shall have the secret of government" (Prov. i. 4, 5). As we have seen, the vast multitude of men who labour and have no time for the pursuit of learning, are still to have thrown open to them the search into the law of the Most High (Ecclus. xxxiii.). And S. Paul applauds Timothy, "because from *infancy* thou hast known the Sacred Scriptures" (2 Timothy iii. 15). Here, then, we have placed before us what we may call the royal way which God has taken to furnish all men with the knowledge their life requires, without distinction of persons and from the first moment the faculties become ripe for the acquiring of such knowledge — namely, "the Sacred Scriptures" given to the people of God through the hands of their accredited teachers, "knowing," as S.

Paul says to Timothy, "from whom thou hast learned them" (2 Timothy iii. 14).

Of this body of Sacred Knowledge, this is not here the place to speak in detail. We must limit ourselves to saying that it absolutely negatives the false and unfounded distinction that modern unbelief attempts to set up between secular and religious knowledge. God has made Himself from the beginning one with His people Israel, and in taking our humanity and becoming the Man Jesus Christ, He made himself a secular person, and still further fitted the knowledge of Himself to the wants of our present life. In other words, the effect of the Incarnation of God has been in simple truth to make the knowledge of God secular knowledge. If S. Paul could appeal to a poet of the nations (Hesiod) in confirmation of his saying, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being," the member of the household of faith does but say further of God, "In Him I have all my knowledge." And this knowledge is such that all who through pride and unbelief separate themselves from it and imagine in their blind-

ness that there can be a secular knowledge which disowns the knowledge of God made Man, must, whether they will or no, submit to their penalty, in being given over to vanity while they live, and in ultimately perishing from off the face of the earth ; while those who adhere to it will be able fearlessly to challenge the admiration of all people, who will be compelled to exclaim, “ Behold a wise and an understanding people.”

Such, then, being the knowledge which God has given, and which is so little ashamed of itself that it confidently challenges the wonder of all people and declares that all who despise it must inevitably perish from off the face of the earth, what is the example which the great Mother of the Christian people sets before the children of her wide-spread family? Is she one who has been diligently brought up in this knowledge, and does she show herself to be one who has diligently employed her time to great profit in acquiring it? We can thank God from our inmost hearts to be able to answer, most emphatically, Yes.

She gives the proof of her having been care-

fully brought up in this knowledge, where she says, in her Magnificat, "He hath taken up Israel His servant, as He hath spoken to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever." Truly marvellous words, and words of the very deepest import. Here is a summary of the entire history of the chosen people of Israel, and of the dealings of God with them, following on from one generation to another, through the long course of centuries down to her own time, in which these promises were fulfilled. To know the promises of God made to our fathers, to Abraham, and to Abraham's seed for ever, is the same, in effect, as to know the whole contents of the Sacred Scriptures; for scarcely a single page of these holy writings but contains, in some form, the promises of God made to the seed of Abraham, and the witness of the inspired writer to their fulfilment.

"Thou shalt teach these words to thy children," said Moses. The great Mother of the Christian family did not acquire her knowledge of the promises made by God and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, in any miraculous manner,

such as renders it impossible for the children of her family to follow her example in acquiring the same knowledge. She was taught it precisely in the same way as they are to be taught it, and she learned it with praiseworthy diligence from her teachers, as they may and should learn it, with the same praiseworthy diligence, from theirs. She is the Mother of the family, and she gives her children no other than a mother's example—that is to say, such an example as her children are perfectly well able to imitate.

There is, however, a feature in her example and a value in her words, that does not altogether appear on the surface, but which we must by no means omit properly to appreciate and understand. Nor can the importance of the truth contained in it be very easily exaggerated. The Holy Mother of the Christian family does not merely appeal to the past, for her proof that God has taken up Israel His servant, as He promised to Abraham and to his seed. She exhibits herself as the present living proof of proofs of the fulfilment of these promises. “He

that is mighty," she says, "hath done great things for *me*. Holy is His Name!"

The Christian Israel of the Apostles and the Martyrs is never to be left without the same succession of the marvellous works of God in their behalf, as those which were continually worked for the Jewish Israel of Moses and of the prophets. The words of the inspired speaker speak not simply of the promises made by God to Abraham and to his seed, but to Abraham and his seed, *for ever (in sæcula)*. All the nations of the world become the Israel of God, in Jesus Christ, the seed promised to Abraham; and this Christian Israel of God is to continue to the end of time (*in sæcula*); and the promises of God, as the inspired Virgin says, are to hold good and to have their fulfilment, for this Christian Israel, equally to the end of time.

In order, then, that our knowledge as Christians may (and when do the loving children of the family otherwise than desire to conform to the example of their Mother?) be rightly formed upon the pattern of that of their great Chris-

tian Mother, it must, of necessity, comprise the knowledge how God has taken up the cause of Christian Israel His servant, according to His promise, down to our own present time. Time does not stand still, but unfolds itself. The promises of God to Abraham and his seed not only stand good to the end of time, but are to have their never-ceasing accomplishment to the end of time. If, therefore, the knowledge which the Blessed Virgin had of the fulfilment of the promises of God was complete in this, that it came down to her own time, indeed to her very own self, our knowledge, to be equally complete, must, in the same manner, come down to our own time. It must, in a word, be able to trace the fulfilment of these promises of God through the eighteen centuries of the Christian history down to our own present time, as, in like manner, the proper Christian knowledge for the generations that come after us will have to trace the fulfilment of these promises so much further still, down to their own time, each generation adding its own share to the tale of this fulfilment, and, consequently, adding so

much more also to the general body of the knowledge that is proper for the Christian people to acquire.

In other words, we can only, then, have—and no statement can easily exaggerate the importance of this great truth—a Christian education of the youth of the Catholic Church rightly formed on the pattern of that of the great Mother of the Christian family, when the knowledge of the fulfilment of the promises of God is traced and taught not only through the Hebrew history, but also through the successive centuries of the Christian history down to our own times. This alone is really our Christian Mother's pattern of the knowledge which she acquired under the guidance of the third gift of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of Knowledge. It was only by the possession of such complete knowledge as this that she was able to glorify God for the fulfilment of all His promises made to Abraham and his seed *for ever*. It was only in the strength of such complete knowledge as this that she was able to say, "He hath done great things for *me*. Holy is His Name!"

DISCOURSE THE SIXTH.

The fourth gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Fortitude; and in what manner the great Mother of the Christian family exemplifies this Spirit for the encouragement of her children.

It is recorded, by his biographer, of the well-known Dr Johnson, that on hearing it said of one of his acquaintances that he was greatly wanting in fortitude, he observed, "Then, sir, he will very soon be without any of the other virtues." In these words we have very probably an independent testimony, which is not without its value, to the truth of a Catholic doctrine. Fortitude, S. Thomas teaches, holds the foremost post as the conservative of the other virtues, just as cowardice, in which, under certain conditions, there will not be wanting the guilt of mortal sin, is a principal cause of their being lost.

S. Thomas's words run as follows: "The

good which right reason embraces as such," according to S. Dionysius, "is the proper good of man, and this good 'prudence' possesses essentially, as being itself right reason in its perfection. Justice is productive of this good, inasmuch as it appertains to justice to establish the order of right reason in all human things. The other virtues* (temperance and fortitude) are conservative of this good, inasmuch as they control the passions and prevent them leading men aside from the good of reason. And here fortitude holds the post of pre-eminence, for the fear of danger, particularly of the danger of death, exercises a most powerful influence in drawing men aside from the good of reason." †

Quite similar passages might be quoted from other parts of the "summa" of S. Thomas, all confirming the truth that the general fear of painful labour and suffering that is proper to our nature and that reaches its height in the fear of

* S. Thomas is here speaking of the four cardinal virtues—*Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude.*

† (2da 2dæ qu. cxxiii. 12.)

death, must always be liable to place such formidable obstacles in the way of virtue and religion, that the spirit of fortitude becomes in consequence indispensable for the needs of our Christian life.

S. Paul's words, where he is speaking of the difficulties which beset his work as an Apostle, may be taken as an apt illustration how the case stands. He says: "For when we had come to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest; we had to go through every kind of tribulation, fightings without, fears within" (2 Cor. vii. 5).

God had a signal purpose of mercy in view, when He implanted in man the repugnance to all that is painful and the dread and terror of death. By this capacity for suffering the pains of both body and mind, we are made amenable to a discipline of continual correction. In the case of the higher spirits created in light, their trial was short and decisive; and the reprobation of the angels who fell was, once for all, irreversible and for eternity. But in the case of man made of flesh and blood—lower than the angels—the Scripture says the "just man

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shall fall seven times and shall rise again." The original plan, then, of the Divine Creation provided this very capacity for suffering pain, in order that through it God might have a perpetual power in His hands to teach man what to avoid; that He might make it minister to his recovery if he fell, and that it might furnish the means of applying continual correction to whatever might need correction. It was no part of the original Divine Creation, that an enemy of man should obtain a footing in His world, and should come to be able to make use of this capacity for the ends of his own evil dominion. We have received it from God, in order to our being amenable to His own Divine and fatherly chastisements and not to the will of Satan. Such an enemy was never meant to hold in his hands the power of pressure and compulsion proper to our nature of flesh and blood, that he might thereby rivet his chains upon us, and hold us fast bound in our sins. Yet this is precisely what has been the consequence of Eve's listening to the deceit of her enemy, and of her drawing Adam aside to share

in the deception. Satan then gained a footing in a world not belonging to him, and God in His wisdom did not see fit then and there to take away from him what he had gained. The delivery was to be in God's own way and time; and S. Paul makes this known to us in the following words: "Because therefore the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He also would partake of the same, that by death He might destroy him who had the power of death; that is, the devil, and that He might deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their life subject to servitude (Heb. ii. 14).

The Scripture furnishes us with many memorable examples of the way in which God, on the one side, has used our fear of pain and death to enforce His Divine law; and, on the other, how Satan has also used it to dispute the sovereignty of God and to uphold his own rival power. For an example, among many, it was a precept of the law of Moses, "Thou shalt not bring anything into thine house that has come from an idol, lest thou become like it

anathema" (Deut. vii. 26). In the Book of Josue we have recorded an example of the transgression of this precept by an Israelite which brought a defeat on the army of Israel. The transgressor was discovered by the lot falling on his tribe, and then on his family, until it came to himself, and when Josue said to him, "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, confess and tell me what thou hast done, conceal it not,"—the delinquent made a full confession of his guilt. All Israel, the Scripture says, then assembled themselves in the valley of Achor, and there they publicly stoned the offender to death, and burnt all that belonged to him with fire; and they erected a great heap of stones over the place, which the Scripture relates remains "up to the present day" to perpetuate the memory of the judgment. Here God is seen using the fear and dread of death to enforce His own laws.

Let us now see a contrary instance of the enemy of God, the deceiver of Eve, using the fear of a terrible death to establish the worship of an idol against the worship of God.

Nabuchodonosor the King set up an image of gold, of the height of sixty cubits and of the breadth of six cubits; and when a vast multitude from all parts of his empire were assembled before it, a herald proclaimed, "To you it is said, ye peoples, tribes, and languages: in the same hour that ye hear the sound of the trumpet and all kinds of music, you fall down and adore the image which Nabuchodonosor the King has set up. And if any one shall not fall down and adore it, the same hour he shall be cast into the furnace of burning fire." Even then there were three Hebrews—Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, who refused to fall down, and who preferred to be cast into the fire: the first fruits of the innumerable army of martyrs, who were to be seen hereafter to defy death in its most terrible forms.

The Christian law in the same way has abounded in precisely similar examples of God continuing to enforce respect to His Name by the fear of suffering and of death; while Satan, for his part, on the other hand, has never ceased with increased rage to employ the

fear of tortures and violent death, to hinder the progress of the faith preached by the Apostles and the Church.

Hardly had the Apostolic doctrines begun to make their way among the people of Jerusalem, before the judgment of sudden death inflicted by the hand of God upon Ananias and Sapphira, spread, as the Scripture says, a salutary terror "on the whole Church, and on all who heard of it" (Acts vii.). God also has never been known to desist from continually interposing as well to punish the sins of those who have embraced the Christian faith, as when S. Paul, speaking of the guilt of unworthy communicants, says, "for this cause many among you are sick and many sleep" (die) (1 Cor. xi. 30); as also to bring the persecutors of His Church to a bad end (Acts xii. 23). Satan, again, on the other side, has never rested from using his liberty, as far as it has not been taken away from him, to employ the fear of torture and death to deter people from embracing the offer of salvation, made to them in the Christian covenant. Hence the particular

tenor of the message of the Spirit, to the Church of Smyrna, contained in the Apocalypse, "Fear none of the things thou art about to suffer: Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation for ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii. 10). Space does not permit here more than a bare mention of the Roman Empire, and the war of extermination which Satan waged for three hundred years, through its courts of law, against the Christian people, in which a countless army of martyrs proved themselves superior to the fear of death in its worst forms—a war, it may be observed, that other powers, yet to come into the world, may carry on, with even greater fierceness still, in the times yet to come.

Seeing, then, that God in His wisdom has not judged it to be good for the Christian people, that their adversary Satan, the deceiver of Eve, should have his power of inflicting torture and death wholly taken away from him,

and seeing that it is according to the will of God that Christian life should, on the whole, be subjected, in ways infinitely too varied to enumerate, according to the Apostle's words, to "fightings without, fears within;" it becomes clear at once that God, in His fatherly mercy, will consider and provide for the condition of the flesh and blood that He has created, and which by embracing the Christian faith, to which all men are called, must necessarily become exposed to the merciless rage and power of Satan that He has not thought good entirely to take away from him. This God has done for us, through the fourth gift of the Holy Ghost—"The Spirit of Fortitude."

Fortitude is the characteristic virtue of the profession of arms, and so indispensable is fortitude to the life and calling of military service, that a soldier without it is an object of universal contempt. It must be a thing then worthy of note, that S. Paul's favourite mode of animating his converts to courageous perseverance as Christians, is by using to them the language of military service; "Put on,"

he says, "the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the snares of the devil. For our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. . . . Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in all things taking the shield of faith wherewith you may be enabled to extinguish the fiery darts of the most wicked one, and take to you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephes. vi. 11, &c.). The good soldier of Jesus Christ, as S. Paul exhorts Timothy to prove himself to be, manifestly cannot be without fortitude; and so indispensable is fortitude, as we are taught, to the Christian life, that we find throughout the Apocalypse, the Divine reward invariably promised, only to "him who shall conquer." "Thus," S. John says, "he that shall conquer, shall possess those things, and I will be to him

a God, and he shall be to me a son ;” and then, what is equally well worthy of note, he proceeds to mention the *cowards* as the *first* among those who are to have their place in the lake of burning fire, which is the second death (Apoc. xxi. 7).

If, then, it is, as we have just seen, thus indispensable to the very constitution of Christian life in this world, that there should be a generous and ample correspondence, on our part, with the Divine Gift of the Holy Spirit of Fortitude, we may rest assured that the great Mother of the Christian family will not fail to place before her children, for their encouragement, the motherly example of her own perfect correspondence with this most merciful provision of the Divine bounty, for the needs of our life. Let us study her example.

Fortitude displays itself in the twofold way of courage and promptitude in action, and in the steadfast patience with which painful labours, suffering, and death are endured.

The fortitude in action that is proper to woman, is not to be looked for outside the

even and unobtrusive tenor of domestic life. The inspired description of fortitude in woman, that is found in the Book of Proverbs, does not go beyond the region of domestic life. The strong woman there, is the one who takes up her distaff and looks out her wool and her flax, and apportions their work to her maids ; and, as the Evangelists have left us no description of the daily life of the holy household in Nazareth, we are left to picture to ourselves the perfect example of matronly fortitude in action which it presented. We may, however, judge from the example of complete intelligent self-possession with which the Blessed Mary weighed and considered the words of the holy Archangel, how perfect must have been the order of daily life in a dwelling which was governed by a matronly authority such as hers.

The chief example, however, which the Mother of the Christian family places before her children, of her correspondence with the Holy Spirit of Fortitude, is not so much in the way of promptitude in action as in that

of patience and fortitude in endurance. Her example in this respect shines forth in the giving her consent to her Son's offering Himself as a victim of expiation for the sins of the whole world, and in the unfaltering endurance of all that she had to go through, in order publicly to signify to all the world that it was with her unreserved consent that He offered Himself; a proof which she gave by standing close to His cross until His sacrifice was consummated.

The tradition of the Catholic Church loves to call Mary the co-redemptrix of the human race; and this title is one that easily justifies itself to the most sober reason. S. Anselm says, "Let there be the least thing that is unbecoming, and in God it becomes impossible." If God condescends to become the Son of a woman, He can be no other than a Son perfect in all the duty that a Son owes to his Mother. But He could not, as a Son perfect in His duty to His Mother, undertake a work involving His separation from her, without first making this known to her and obtaining her

consent. Moreover, His expiation of the world's sin on the cross, was also to be at the same time His own espousals with His new bride—the Church—the Hebrew synagogue being then rejected. Now the immemorial tradition of all mankind requires that a dutiful son should always ask his parents' consent to his marriage. The free consent, therefore, of the Mother to the sacrifice of her Son on the Cross, now that He has become her Son, may be seen to be just as essential a part of the Redemption of Man, as was her previous consent to His becoming her Son, at the time of the embassy to her of the Holy Archangel Gabriel. And Mary, by freely giving her consent as Mother, and by publicly signifying her consent, through her presence at the Cross, fully earns her title as co-redemptrix of the human race.

But how is a Mother to bring herself to give her consent to her Son's dying such a death as that of the Cross ; and how is she to endure the sight of her Son's death agony—in the presence of the unbelieving, ungrateful, gainsaying multitude of her Son's own people, not to speak

of the rude Roman soldiery and the other strangers—except she corresponds in the most perfect manner to the Divine Gift of the “Holy Spirit of Fortitude?” When Agar, wandering in the Wilderness, saw nothing but a prospect of death for her son Ismael, she laid him down under a tree, and went the distance of a bow-shot away, saying “I shall not see the boy, as he is dying.” But our Christian Mother’s fortitude had to be proved by her enduring to stand close to His Cross to be the witness of her Son’s death on it; and this, too, not in the solitude of a wilderness, but, in addition, braving all the unbelief of the multitude, and all the merciless scorn and derision of her Son’s enemies. And had our Christian Mother not thus corresponded with the Divine Gift of the Holy Spirit of Fortitude, so as to bear to stand by His Cross, and to bear to be thus present at her Son’s death, the great family of the redeemed would have lacked this marvellous proof that the sacrifice of their redemption was offered, not alone by the free will of the Divine Victim Himself, but

also with the free consent of the most Holy Mother, who brought Him into the world.

O Most Holy Mother, teach your pusillanimous children by the marvellous example that you place before them, to stir up within themselves the Divine gift of the "Holy Spirit of Fortitude," to meet all the trials of their Christian life, so that "the hands that hang down and the feeble knees may be lifted up;" and ever pray for us, that we may not shrink from the fightings without, and the fears within, that may be our portion, but that we may rather have continually present to our minds the words of the aged father of the Machabees to his sons, "Do you therefore be strong and quit yourselves like men in the law of God, for in it shall be your glory" (1 Mach. ii. 64).

DISCOURSE THE SEVENTH.

The Fifth Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Counsel, and how the great Mother of the Christian family exemplifies this Spirit for the guidance of her children.

IN order to be able adequately to perceive in what way God has formed His world of men to live under the rule and sway of the Holy Spirit of Counsel, nothing more is necessary than to turn to the Book of Genesis, to read there the history which relates what passed between Eve and the Spirit of Evil Counsel, who was permitted to approach her in Paradise, that God might prove how she would use both her authority and the faculties of mind and understanding with which she had been endowed.

Eve, in the exercise of her undoubted sovereignty, might, in case she had so pleased, have refused on the spot the least answer to the very first question of this Evil Spirit, dis-

missing him from her presence, there and then, to mind his own business; or, she might have replied to him that the law of God her Creator admitted of no question, but was one simply to be obeyed. Even in the last resort after she had been so extremely incautious as to allow the deceiving Spirit an unrestrained hearing for all he had to say, it was not then too late for her to have answered him, "I am by creation the helpmate and associate of Adam, I can act upon no one's counsel without first consulting with him. Had she done this, she would have done no more than listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit of Counsel, in opposition to the misleading of the Spirit of Evil Counsel, who was thus permitted, in the first outset, to make the trial of her prudence and discretion.

That God should have allowed Eve to be subjected to a trial which ended in her transgression of His law, through the misleading of an evil counsellor, and that He should have permitted Adam also to be drawn into the same transgression by the persuasion of His help-

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mate and associate, proves two highly important truths.

(I.) The great extent of the natural flexibility which God has given to the human spirit, so that although God has left every one, as the Scripture says, "in the hand of his own counsel" (Ecclus. xv. 14), and has said, "Every one shall bear his own burden" (Gal. vi. 5), nevertheless, by our social constitution, and through our being both by nature and grace made members one of another, we are at every instant of our lives open to endless influences of persuasion, one from another. There is, indeed, not a moment of our lives, so to speak, when we may not be brought under the influence of advice given to us, and when, in a thousand ways, of the nature and extent of which we can by no means at all times be fully aware, we may not be subjected to the action of a persuasive power that is in the hands of others. And (II.) since the same reasons which, in the beginning, permitted Eve to undergo the ordeal of an encounter with a deceiving spirit notwithstanding that the victory of the adversary over her

- was foreknown, still hold good in the counsels of God as regards ourselves, and since the family of men on earth, in pursuance of these reasons, continues to be subject to the danger of deceptions coming from the same deceiver to whose lies Eve incautiously listened to the great prejudice of the obedience she owed to her God, we learn how wide is the extent and how sovereign is the importance of the functions reserved for the Holy Spirit of Counsel in the divine economy of the world of men. Considering the flexible and easily persuasible nature which God has given to the human spirit, had God not in His mercy been pleased continually to oppose the true light and the salutary direction of His own Holy Spirit of Counsel to the deceptions of the Apostate Angel, His creation could scarcely have failed to walk without check or hindrance in the footsteps of Eve, to their own hopeless deception and ruin. But a nature which the Divine Creator formed to be persuasible, and to be led by counsel, was not to be abandoned to the sole direction of the wiles and artifices of the Evil One. To the evil counsels

of Satan was to be opposed the unceasing action of the Holy Spirit of Counsel coming from God. And though God permitted a most serious wound to be inflicted on His work, through the failure of the resistance with which Eve ought to have met the treacherous counsels of her deceiver, the work of God was not, on this account, to suffer a total defeat. God was still to be glorified in the creation which He had formed thus persuasible and open to the influence of counsel, through the willingness of men to be freely led by His own Holy Spirit of Counsel.

But for this end there was to be no compulsion on the side of God. The honour rendered to God by His creation on earth was to be the same in kind as that which is willingly rendered by the jubilant society of the Holy Angels in Heaven. Men on earth in the exercise of their power of free choice were to be allowed perfect freedom to choose between the voice which seduced Eve from her allegiance and the holy persuasions of the Divine Spirit of Counsel. Only in consequence of the footing which the Evil Spirit had gained in the

world through his success with Eve, the Holy Spirit of God was constrained to condescend to the weakness of men, and to consent to compete, as it were, with a rival, as the Church sings—

Ars ut artem falleret
Et medelam ferret inde
Hostis unde læserat.

But even, if on these conditions of condescension the creation which God had made should be found in the end to fail to glorify Him, the Spirit of Evil was not to reap the profit. God said, “My Spirit shall not remain in man for ever, for he is flesh; his days shall be a hundred and twenty years” (Gen. vi. 3). The world then existing was to have a term of a hundred and twenty years granted to it, at the end of which it was to be destroyed if it was then found to be hopelessly averse to its own good. During these hundred and twenty years Noe was a preacher of justice to his generation, and as their term approached, the Divine warning was given to him, “The earth is filled with iniquity; from before their face I will destroy them. Build thee an ark” (Gen. vi. 13).

Satan, then, Eve's deceiver, had now so far prevailed, that a whole world was to be swept off the face of the earth, to make way for a new world, to be born from the family of the one preacher of justice, who was found faithful to the counsels of the Divine Spirit. With this world God has made a covenant, which is still in force, that He will never bring the waters of a deluge upon it as He had done upon its predecessor.

The same warfare between the Spirit of Deception, whose evil counsels had brought the former world to its ruin, and the Holy Spirit of God marks the course of its successor. Only the cry of the Holy Spirit is now more urgent. "Doth not Wisdom," says the Book of Proverbs, "cry aloud, and Prudence utter her voice, on the top of the heights above the highways, and standing in the middle of the paths, close to the gates of the city, and in the very doors she speaks, saying, O men, to you I cry aloud, and my voice is to the sons of men. Hear ye, for I am about to speak of great things, my lips shall be opened that they may declare the things

that are just. My mouth shall speak the truth, and my lips shall detest the impious" (Prov. viii. 1). And when the fulness of time came the prophecy was fulfilled; "God Himself was seen on earth, and conversed with men" (Baruch iii. 38), being manifested, as S. Paul says, to destroy the works of the Devil.

Our special task, however, is to study the operation of the "Holy Spirit of Counsel" in the midst of the Christian society, which is founded on the solemn public and formal renunciation by every one of its members of the Spirit of Evil Counsel, of all his works and all his pomps and deceits.

We may then, for brevity's sake, be satisfied with saying that the principal ways in which the Holy Spirit of Counsel operates in the midst of the Christian society that call for our attentive study, are three in number.

(I.) This Holy Spirit is present to aid and assist us in the deliberations which we may be at any time called upon to make in the course of life in the depth of our own mind and thought, out of which is to come the decisive,

and of course, more or less momentous choice by which we must definitely abide.

(II.) It is present with us to prompt us diligently to exercise the most watchful wariness and the most jealous caution as to what kind of persuasive influences we are habitually willing to trust ourselves: prompting us, on the one hand, to keep ourselves out of the way of every kind of unknown and doubtful company, seductive amusement, or dangerous book, and at once to discern and to forbid so much as the approach of anything likely to lead to evil; and on the other hand, to set the greatest value on society with the wise and the good, in the Christian household, and to be willing at all times to accept and listen to the wise reproofs and counsels of those in whom we have just reason to know that we can place a well-founded confidence and reliance.

(III.) It is present with us to enable us to fulfil wisely and prudently the charitable office of counsellors and advisers to all such as may seek our help, or stand in need of the best aid

and assistance which we may be able to render them by our advice.

As regards the first of these ways, namely, when the necessity arises for personal deliberation under circumstances that compel the choice of some one particular course of action, though it is uncertain which of the various courses that are open can plead the most cogent reasons in its behalf, we have given to us in one of our Lord's parables a pattern of the manner in which a wise and sagacious man thus circumstanced sets himself about the work of his deliberation. The parable supposes the case of a steward of a large property who, in consequence of a hostile accusation brought against him, is suddenly called upon by the owner to give in his accounts and to retire from his office. He says to himself, "What am I to do? My master is about to take the stewardship away from me. I am not able to do digging work; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do, that when I am put out of my stewardship they may receive me into their houses." That the Holy Spirit of Counsel had

no part in the conclusion ultimately adopted need not here be said, because the particular person is expressly represented in the parable as "a steward of iniquity." The example avails only in the way of a pattern as to what is the prudent and sagacious way in which a deliberation of the particular kind in question is to be commenced and carried on. The man at once puts from his mind all illusion as to what is before him. He says to himself, "There is no mistake; I am to be put out of the stewardship; that is quite certain. It is equally certain that I cannot dig, and that I am ashamed to beg;" and finally, after due reflection as to what is open to him, he comes to his conclusion, "I know what I must do."

The action of the Holy Spirit of God in the Christian society is not to override, or in any way to supersede, the honest use of the good natural faculties that God has given to us, and the right use of which He blesses. Every Christian, then, who finds himself in anything like a similar predicament to that of the steward in the parable, in which he is compelled by

circumstances, to choose what course he will take,—if he desires to be aided in his choice by the Holy Spirit of Counsel, he must first set about his work of deliberation with himself in precisely the same wise and sagacious way as the unjust steward. He must remove from his mind every illusion, put all the circumstances of the case plainly and clearly before his judgment, and then supplicate (a thing which the unjust steward did not do) the Holy Spirit of Counsel to enlighten and direct his choice.

But this is precisely the example which the Great Mother of the Christian family sets before her children. When she received the embassy of the Holy Archangel she was placed under the necessity of making her choice whether she would accept or refuse the proposal made to her. The prospect, as we have already had occasion to show in treating of the “Holy Spirit of the fear of the Lord,” was in itself of a nature so unspeakably attractive that it might reasonably be supposed to have brought about at least a temporary suspension of every faculty of judgment that might have given rise to any

hesitation, through the very excess of its ravishing splendour and brightness. Mary, however, is in no way thrown off from her equilibrium of clear and calm deliberation. She gives place in her mind to no kind of illusion. She says to herself, "It is quite certain that I am bound by vow to remain a virgin"—and she replies to the angel, "Very good, but how can these things be to one who is bound, as I am, by the vow of remaining a virgin?" In what way the conclusion she finally came to gives proof of her further fidelity to the Holy Spirit of Counsel we may reserve till we come to treat of the seventh gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Wisdom. The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, S. Gregory says, are figured by the seven sons of Job, who were continually feasting each other in their respective houses, and their action in the Christian soul who receives them may be frequently of so conjoint a nature that it is not given to us to discern what may properly belong to each one: moreover, the Holy Spirit of God can never be divided against Himself in such a manner as

that any of His seven gifts could possibly draw their recipients in opposite ways.

The second chief mode in which the action of the Holy Spirit of Counsel manifests itself is, in the first instance, in prompting all who desire to be faithful to its suggestions to be exceedingly jealous as to the trusting themselves within the reach of any strange or unknown influences. It was here that Eve's indiscretion is most apparent. She ought never to have allowed the Spirit of Evil Counsel, of whom she had no previous knowledge, that complete opportunity of misleading her which she gave him with an excess of freedom from which all due restraint and caution on her part were totally absent. Mary's example, in this respect, is the very contrary to that of Eve. The favourite figure under which she is described in the Scripture is the "Lily among the thorns," fenced from all undue approach. And S. Ambrose, in proposing Mary as a model to women, says, "Alone in her secret chamber, an angel only could find one whom no man had ever seen. In solitude, without a com-

panion, without a witness, secure against the approach of any degenerate deceiver, Mary receives the salutation of an angel." And in the second instance, the action of the Holy Spirit of Counsel prompts us to have a real earnest desire for, and at all times diligently to seek the society of the wise, the good and virtuous of the Christian household, joined to a readiness to receive, with a becoming humility and attention, all that they may have to say to us in the way of caution and advice. That the Mother of God should place before us an example of receiving the advice of others, we could scarcely expect, for who can be easily judged competent to have tendered their advice to her, but if we could not reasonably look for this, we have, on the other hand, expressly recorded the example of her love for the society of the good and the virtuous of the household of faith. Of our Lord's disciples, immediately after His Ascension into heaven special mention is made, that all these continued with one mind, persevering in prayer with the women and with Mary the Mother of Jesus (Acts i. 14).

The third and last way in which we have to study the action of the Holy Spirit of Counsel in the Christian society is in respect of the good offices as counsellors and advisers to others, which, besides that such good offices are in themselves natural and agreeable to the order of human life, Christian charity cannot but continually call upon us to render them to others, in the best manner we may be able, never, indeed, intrusively but always willingly, and, as far as possible, wisely and prudently, as the fitting occasions arise.

Considering the very flexible nature which, as we have said, God has been pleased in His wisdom to give to the human spirit individually, and the very great extent to which the human family is socially knit and bound together, nothing else could be expected than that the counsel which is mutually given and received from one to another, should play a most important part in swaying and directing the destinies of humanity on earth, whether for good or for evil. “My son, do nothing without counsel,” says the inspired writer, “and

afterwards thou shalt not repent" (Ecclus. xxxii. 24). "Let the word of truth go before thee in every undertaking, and a steadfast counsel before every action" (xxxvii. 20). There is related in the history of King David a striking example showing how the destiny of a whole kingdom may hang on the issue of a single piece of advice. When David, on learning the rebellion of his son, Absalom, found it necessary to escape on the spot out of Jerusalem, he told his faithful friend and adherent Chusai to return into the city to offer himself to Absalom as a counsellor. There was in David's Court another man of marvellous repute for his wisdom as a counsellor, Achitophel, who had joined the rebellion, and on Absalom's entry into Jerusalem, Achitophel had counselled him that a force of twelve thousand armed men should be sent off the same night to surprise David's army when they were weary and dispirited. Absalom accepted the advice, but said, "Call Chusai, and let us first hear what he counsels." Chusai, when called said, "The counsel of Achitophel this

time is not good: you know your father, and the men that are with him, that they are very valiant and bitter in mind, as a bear raging in the wood when her cubs are taken away. Let all Israel be gathered together, from Dan to Bersabe, and we shall not leave of the men that are with him so much as one." This counsel of Chusai saved David's kingdom, and the Scripture says the wise counsel of Achitophel was defeated that the Lord might bring evil on Absalom. Wisdom of counsel, then, as the above, and numberless other examples, would plainly show if space permitted them to be cited, is appointed to play a most important part in the world of men.

But if this be true, the Mother of the Christian family, as her children may naturally expect, will most certainly not omit to set before them her own example how the good offices of giving counsel and advice to others, when the fitting occasions arise, are to be rendered under the holy guidance and direction of the Divine Spirit of Counsel. We may be sure that her maternal example in this respect

cannot fail to be given to us. How does she fulfil our expectations?

Our Lord Himself was by His office a public Teacher of men, and in the discharge of His office He had occasion to utter many words of counsel to His hearers. But He never would allow any one to felicitate himself on his merely having heard Him speak, though He spake as never man spoke yet. He said, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and *keep* it" (Luke xi. 28); and "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye *do* them" (John xiii. 17); "He that heareth these my words and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man that built his house on the rock; he that heareth them, and doeth them not, I will liken him to the foolish man that built his house on the sand." All, then, plainly depends on our really *doing* what the Divine Teacher tells us we are to do. Now what is the model counsel which the Mother of the Christian family sets her children the example of giving?

At the marriage feast of Cana, after having represented to her Son the distress of the

family at the failure of their supply of wine, and having received a reply that His hour for working miracles WAS NOT YET COME, she turned to the servants and gave them this counsel, "WHATSOEVER HE SHALL TELL YOU TO DO, DO IT." Can there possibly be a better piece of model advice spoken by human lips? Holy Mary! our Mother! has not of a truth the Holy Church throughout the world most just reason to honour thee under the invocation of "OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL!"

DISCOURSE THE EIGHTH.

The Sixth Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Understanding, and how the great Mother of the Christian family exemplifies this Spirit for the instruction of her children.

THE command given by God to His newly formed world of man, as represented in the persons of Adam and Eve, "to fill the earth and to subdue it," proves that the natural felicity which the Divine Creator provided for those whom He had made, did not consist in simple possession, but in *operating* with a view to acquire possession. A creature endowed with the faculties and the powers proper for operation was created, and the natural felicity of this creature was consequently to be in the legitimate use of these powers of operating. The Creator in strict justice might have stopped here. Had He so pleased He might have formed a creature for no other end than simply to multiply his species, to spread over the

earth, raise produce, employ himself in all kinds of manufacturing industries, and in the cultivation of the known arts and sciences proper to the wants of his life. The vast number, indeed, of the unbelievers who are living without God in the world, see in the human species nothing else than simply a being of this kind, short-lived and possessed of very varying degrees of intelligence. Why such a being as this should come into the world ; why he should die out of it as he is seen to do ; what, if any, are to be his hopes and destiny after death—on all such questions as these, their understanding, by their own choice, is a simple blank ; and yet, singular to relate, these are precisely the persons whose principal characteristic is the special boast they are not ashamed to make of the strength of their understandings.

The Divine Creator, to resume our subject, as we have said, might, so far at least as His creation could have preferred any claim of justice to the contrary, have stopped short at the point where He assigned to the family of men “the subduing the earth” as their proper labour.

But what God may not owe as a debt of justice to His creatures, He may nevertheless owe to Himself and to His own attributes of wisdom and goodness. Since, then, the creation is designed to manifest the glory of the Divine Creator, it is easily to be perceived how manifestly it becomes the wisdom and goodness of God, that the creature man, endowed with the naturally great powers that are required for "subduing the earth," should also receive the superadded power to use his highest faculties, in which he excels all the other creatures, in the contemplation of His Divine Creator, and in the worship and adoration which is the natural concomitant of such contemplation, finding his true and real happiness in this contemplation and worship.

This expectation arising out of the attributes of wisdom and goodness in the Creator, received its fulfilment in the first beginning of the world, in the institution of the Divine rest of the seventh (Sabbath) day, which commanded the suspension for that day of the labours of subduing the earth, and the substitution in their

place of the fitting holy exercises of the contemplation of God, and its concomitant of public and private worship.

However, just as the innumerable company of the angels created in light has given birth to a rebellion in which great numbers of the heavenly host have forfeited their principality, and have been cast out of heaven to become fallen and wandering spirits; so the history of the human creation shows the appearance of a similar phenomenon in their own world, in the existence of a large multitude of unbelievers or rebels, who, to use the words of the book of Job, say to God, "Depart from us, we will not have the knowledge of thy ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit shall we have if we were to pray to Him?" (Job xxi. 14). These men form the company of those of whom S. Augustine speaks as the "earthly city" (*terrena civitas*), in contradistinction to the people of the city of God; and the mark of distinction by which both companies have always been known from the beginning, as they will continue to be known to the end

of time, is, that the one company in obedience to the Divine command suspends the labours of subduing the earth each seventh day, to give themselves to rest and the contemplation of God as their true felicity. The other rejects the knowledge of God, and employs all days alike in the labour of subduing the earth, in the successful prosecution of which they recognise their only known good.

As the separation between the people of the earthly city—who have, as S. Augustine says, their good things in the present world, but are hereafter to suffer eternal pains with the devil in the future world—and the people of the city of God, first takes effect on the question of obedience or disobedience to the Divine command, to spend the seventh day in the contemplation of God, it will be opportune here to take a brief glance at the principal reasons with which S. Thomas establishes the truth, that the work of the contemplation of God, which the Divine Legislation of the seventh day is intended to secure, forms the true happiness of man.

S. Thomas treats the subject at length in the work which he has written as the Theology of the Catholic Missionary who has to deal with the errors of the heathen nations,* and he there reasons that the true end of every creature, endowed with understanding, is to arrive at "*understanding God*" through the operation of the intelligence which is His proper gift. He comes to this conclusion on the ground that all creatures, even those destitute of intelligence, are made by God for Himself, and that God is their ultimate end to which they tend, in so far as they in any degree participate in His likeness. Since, then, intelligent creatures participate in some more special manner in the likeness of God, it follows that they are created to come to Him in some more special manner, namely, by the operation of the intelligence which is proper to them; and hence, to attain to an understanding of God is the true end of the creature who is endowed with intelligence.

Moreover, S. Thomas reasons that the operation that is proper to every creature is the

* *Summa contra Gentiles.*

end of its being ; for this is its secondary perfection. Hence, whatever it be that performs the work proper to itself well, is pronounced to be virtuous and good. But "*to understand*" is the operation that is proper to a creature endowed with intelligence. This, therefore, is its end : and that which is the most perfect in this operation is its ultimate end. From this he concludes that to understand the most perfect of the things which come within the reach of the understanding, namely God, is the most excellent of all the possible operations of the understanding ; and hence, to come to the knowledge of God through the use of the understanding is the end of every creature that is endowed with the gift of intelligence ; and the attainment of this knowledge is true happiness.

True happiness, S. Thomas then proceeds to reason, does not consist in bodily pleasures, for these are provisions of the Creator for special purposes, and are common to the lower creatures as well as to man ; and if the true happiness of man were to be found in them,

there could be no place for the virtue of temperance, which consists in abstinence from such pleasures.

True happiness is not found in honours and distinctions, or in a great reputation ; for though the honour of others, especially if it be honour paid by the wise and good, contains a valuable testimony to our merit ; still it is not in a man's own power to obtain honours, for this rests with the giver, and honours may be frequently obtained by the unprincipled and the evil-doers.

True happiness does not consist in the possession of wealth, for as far as true happiness consists in the possession of anything, that thing ought to be something higher and better than a man's self ; but riches are of less value than the man himself, for they are things provided for and subject to his use, and their value consists in their being spent. Besides, they are liable to the risk of loss.

True happiness does not consist in the possession of worldly power, for if power were man's highest good, it ought to be perfect in

its own degree. But all human power is most imperfect, for it has its root in the will and opinions of men, in whom there is the greatest inconstancy ; and the greater it is reputed to be, the more it depends upon others, all which tends to produce its weakness ; for that which depends upon great numbers is liable to be overthrown in so many more different ways. The highest good of man, therefore, cannot be in the possession of power.

It does not consist in the working at any art or calling, for all the produce of such labours are the various products of art and industry, which are all made for the use of men. Such things as these, therefore, cannot be the ultimate end of human life.

If, then, argues S. Thomas, the ultimate happiness of man does not consist in the external things which are known as the goods of fortune, nor in the operation of the understanding applied to the affairs of ordinary life, it remains that the ultimate happiness of man should be found in the contemplation of the truth. And to this operation of the under-

standing, adds S. Thomas, all other human operations appear to be ordered as to their proper end. For to the perfection of contemplation, personal well-being and security is necessary; and to the attainment of this personal well-being, all the products of the various arts and trades required for human life are subservient. Inward quiet of mind from the storms of passion is likewise needed, and to this we attain by the moral virtues and by prudence; as also peace and freedom from external disturbance are needed, to secure which is the end of the whole framework of civil government. So that, rightly considered, all the offices of human life appear to conspire together to subserve the ends of those who contemplate the truth.

The above reasoning of S. Thomas inculcates a doctrine that is all-important to our subject, namely, that inasmuch as God has given to us the natural gift of understanding or intelligence, our proper happiness consists in the true and highest use and application of this gift, that is, in the "contemplation of the truth," or in other

words, in the attaining to a knowledge and understanding of God.

But because "the contemplation of the truth" is the highest use of the understanding, and our ultimate happiness consists in it, we must by no means fall into the error of supposing that the order of the creation, which assigns to man the "subduing the earth" for his labour in this world, is in any way repealed. The words of the Divine Law are very clear. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy works, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt do no work on it. The Lord rested on the seventh day, and therefore He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Exod. xx. 9). The order of Christian life is consequently formed on the Divine model. The intelligence of man has its portion of labour meted out after the pattern of God Himself. Six days are given to him for all the necessary and honourable avocations and employments of his life, and on the seventh day these are suspended, that his intelligence may be employed in a more set manner on the con-

templation of God, and in the various acts of Divine worship proper to the day.

It is, then, this distinctive natural gift of the understanding, the proper characteristic of man, whose function it is to govern and direct all the operations of our life, as well those that are proper to the six days of labour, as those that appertain to the seventh day of rest, which is the recipient of the sixth gift of the Holy Ghost, the “Spirit of Understanding.” And although this Divine Spirit is given principally in the way of aid to the contemplation and knowledge of God, its riches redound to the aiding and perfecting all the legitimate operations of the understanding. And to this, experience bears a most corroborative testimony ; for we never see a nation or people who manifest a zeal for paying to God the honour due to Him in the sanctification of His Holy Day of Rest, and in studying the knowledge which He has revealed respecting Himself in the volume of the Sacred Scriptures, who do not give proofs of their possessing greatly superior gifts of the understanding in the conduct and direction of

all the other good and legitimate works of their industry to which the labours of the remaining six days are set apart.

But it is now time to study the example which our Holy Mother sets before us of her correspondence with the gift of the Holy Spirit of Understanding. Had any Evangelist given us a narrative of the manner in which the Holy Family at Nazareth were accustomed to spend their Sabbath-day, we should then have had our great Mother's example in this respect formally placed before us. Nevertheless, we know from S. Luke that Nazareth possessed a synagogue, in which its religious inhabitants assembled for their observance of the Sabbath; that is, for the reading and expounding the Sacred Scriptures, and the worship proper to the day, such as could be offered away from the courts of the Temple and the one altar of sacrifice. We may, consequently, therefore, without much difficulty, picture to ourselves what her edifying example must have been each Sabbath-day as it came round. Numberless pious Christian mothers, indeed, in this respect sufficiently

reflect her example, in their devout attention to the public instructions of the sanctuary, in their assiduity and vigilance in the regulation of their households, in the attentive instruction of their children, and in their care to set apart some portion of their time for holy reading. However, when S. Luke relates as he does that “Jesus made progress in years, and in wisdom, and in favour with God and man,” we must not forget how much it is in accordance with the order of God’s creation, that a son at the age in question should be indebted to the instruction received from, and the example set before him by, his mother.

But if no Evangelist has judged it necessary to describe the mode in which the Holy Family passed their Sabbath-day, we are not left without a precious testimony as to the habitual correspondence of our Holy Mother’s whole mind and current of thought with the gift of the Holy Spirit of Understanding. The Holy Ghost, without doubt, spoke by her mouth all the words to which she gave utterance in her Canticle of the Magnificat; but, nevertheless, if this were the

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place to cite the necessary examples, it would plainly appear from them that it is very far removed from the rule of God's speaking through the mouth of His servants, to constrain them to utter thoughts to which their minds have previously been total strangers. For God to act in this manner to His servants would be to place them on the same level with any one of the heathen augurs or priestesses who were urged on by the possession of a demon, as, for example, the priestess whom Æneas is described as visiting in her cavern :—

“Sed pectus anhelum
Et rabie fera corda tument, major que videri,
Nec mortale sonans.”—*Æneid* Lib. VI.

The rule of God is to build upon the good gifts of His natural creation ; and it was conformably to this rule that He made leaders for His people out of the two shepherds, Moses and David, that He formed the lawgiver of Israel out of one who had been learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and the chief fisher of men out of a fisherman taken from his nets on the banks of the lake of Tiberias. In all the pro-

found knowledge of God and His ways which the language of the Magnificat evinces, we may thus most reasonably trace the workings of a mind previously well-accustomed to the mental labour of thought and meditation, perfectly well-versed in the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and hence in a state of habitual correspondence with the sacred inspirations of the Holy Spirit of Understanding. For example's sake, who can doubt but that the knowledge of Daniel's language to the great monarch of the Assyrian Empire—"To thee it is said, O king Nabuchodonosor, thy kingdom shall pass from thee; they shall cast thee out from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts and wild animals; thou shalt eat grass like an ox, till seven times be changed over thee, until thou knowest that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whom He will" (Daniel iv. 28)—long treasured up in the mind, and maturely meditated, preceded the utterance of the words, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat."

And undoubtedly the Holy Spirit of Understanding by no means limits His action to the prescribed holy labours of the day of rest and the festival. God the Holy Ghost is the Giver of Life, and our Lord says, "This is the life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). All the events of life as they pass, are fitted to minister, through a right use of our powers of understanding, to the adding to our store of the knowledge and understanding of God. And in this way it is that our natural intelligence may receive largely light from the Holy Spirit of Understanding, if we are duly solicitous to invite this Divine aid, by the diligent use which we are careful to make of our natural gift.

Here the Holy Mother of the Christian family sets her children a most admirable and intelligible example. It is related by S. Luke of the inhabitants of Bethlehem, that while they were satisfied by greatly wondering at the things which they heard from the shepherds, "Mary treasured up in her mind all these words,

pondering upon them in her heart” (Luke ii. 19). And again S. Luke relates of Mary that on the return of the Child Jesus from the Temple to dwell with them in Nazareth, “His mother treasured up in her heart all the words He had spoken in the Temple” (Luke ii. 51). Here is the true secret of a religious correspondence with the Holy Gift of the Spirit of Understanding, namely, the humble but diligent and vigilant use of the good natural gift of the creation, our proper gift of intelligence. Here it is that we may especially benefit by the most excellent pattern of our Holy Mother. “MARY TREASURED UP ALL THESE WORDS, PONDERING UPON THEM IN HER HEART.”

DISCOURSE THE NINTH.

The Seventh Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Wisdom, and the manner in which the great Mother of the Christian family exemplifies this Spirit for the instruction of her children.

CARDINAL BELLARMINE says, in his "Summary of Christian Doctrine," that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost may be compared to a ladder, the first step of which in the ascent, the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord, rests on the earth; and the topmost step, the Spirit of Wisdom, touches the heavens. According to this doctrine, the operation of the gift of the Holy Spirit of Wisdom will be to lead the soul that yields herself up without reserve to its guidance, to the highest act of which human nature is capable, namely, to seek to be united to God in the most perfect manner that the condition and the state of life which has been embraced may be found to permit.

Let us proceed to see in what way a more

extended examination of our subject fully bears out, and throws great additional light upon this conclusion.

The earliest information which we have in the Sacred Volume of the creation of man makes known to us that God said, "Let us make man to our own image and likeness." "And God," says the Sacred Text, "created man after His own image; after the image of God He created him, male and female He created them" (Gen. i. 26).

This image of God shines forth very manifestly in the power given to man to stamp the form of his own mind on the various things which he finds in the creation, as also to dispose his own works in such a perfectly well-planned order and connection, one with another, devised by his own intelligence and understanding, whereby they are made to serve the ends for which he has planned and designed them. In this, men undoubtedly give a visible proof of their being made in the image of God.

The Mosaic history of the creation makes known to us that God in the beginning had created the heavens and the earth; but when,

nevertheless, the proper work of the creation, which was to be finished in the six days or periods, began, it found the earth indeed in existence, but without form, and empty of living things—*inanis et vacua*. The Divine work of the six days, then, consisted in constructing the habitable world, as we now know it from the accumulated investigation of many generations of men, in forming the plants, the trees, &c., and all the various orders of animal life which live in the air, on the earth and in the water, superadding, on the sixth day, man, made in the image of God, to be supreme over all things else, and to subdue them to his own purposes and use. But this is precisely the model on which man forms his own constructions. He likewise uses for his own ends the materials which he finds in the creation, shaping his work and directing its capacities for motion according to designs already preconceived in his own intelligence. The created intelligence, and its powers of action and construction, can indeed sustain no comparison with those of its Divine Creator. All power of giving life or motion of its own to anything which

man may make has been withheld from him ; and yet, though the distance between the Creator and His creature cannot be less than infinite, the powers displayed by man in his works bear a most visible testimony to their Divine origin.

“ It has universally obtained,” says S. Thomas, “ that those should be called wise who set things in their right order and govern them well.” And it is in consequence of the visibly marvellous order, and beautiful harmony of every portion of the material creation, together with the perfect regularity in which all the seasons are ordered, and all animated life is governed and upheld, that we are able to discern and acknowledge the perfect wisdom of the Divine Creator, manifesting itself in His work. “ How marvellous are Thy works, O Lord,” exclaims the Psalmist, “ Thou hast made all things in wisdom ” (Ps. ciii. 24).

But of this Wisdom of the Divine Creator, thus manifesting itself in the wonderful beauty, system, harmony, and order of the universe, the created wisdom of man is a reflex. Comparatively imperfect, indeed, as are necessarily all the works

issuing from the wisdom of men, they, nevertheless, do not fail to give perfectly visible proof of a certain manifest system and order, and subordination of parts to the whole. They show, in short, that they are made with the mind of an architect, who seeks, according to his wisdom, a known end in his work, and who is able to order and direct all the various portions of his construction, to co-operate together to the attainment of the end he has in view. This power in man comes to him from God, and it is a reflex of the perfect Wisdom of the Divine Architect, from whom man, as we should never tire of repeating, derives his being, and in whose Image he is made.

However, what it more especially belongs to our subject to show is, that when we have acknowledged the wisdom of which man gives proofs in his works to be a reflex of the Wisdom of the Divine Architect, we have by no means said all. The wisdom which is the good gift of God in the order of His natural creation, on the one hand may attain to be far wiser still, and become equal to far higher works, as

the reward of faithful obedience to the laws of God, and the becoming observance of His Sabbaths and worship ; as, on the other hand, it may become a complete wreck, and be turned to folly and madness, and render itself guilty of every kind of wild disorder and devastation, as the punishment of rebellion against God, through the transgression of His laws and the contempt of His worship.

To prove what we have advanced by suitable examples, among the various great legislators of the nations, there is not one that can sustain a comparison with the Hebrew Legislator, Moses. To this day the various provisions of the laws of Moses serve as undisputed models of legislation, and challenge the wonder of all people for their incontestable wisdom. But then, Moses was the friend of God, and went up to converse with God in the holy mountain for forty days and nights, and God bears witness to him, that while He would speak to others in a vision or through a dream, He would speak face to face with Moses, and would show Himself to him openly, and not through signs and figures (Num. xii. 8).

David was taken from following the flocks of sheep, to serve his people in the office of royalty. He found them an aggregate of separate clans, scattered over the hills of Palestine; but he left them a kingdom, possessed of a capital city, feared and respected by all the surrounding people. The secret of this success was, that he was a man after God's own heart, who did not trust his own wisdom, but consulted God, and received light from God, so that when he was giving his instructions to his son Solomon, respecting the arrangements of the Temple which his son was to build, he was able to say, "All these things came to me written by the hand of the Lord, that I might understand all the works of the pattern"

• (1 Par. xxviii. 19).

Of Solomon, David's son and successor on the throne of Israel, all the world re-echoes the testimony of the Scripture that "he was wiser than all men" (3 Kings iv. 31). But the secret of his wisdom, he himself says, was to know in whose gift it is that a man may become wise: "Considering," he says, "that it is a

part of wisdom to know whose gift it is. I went to the Lord, and I prayed to Him and said with my whole heart, O God of my fathers, Lord of mercy, who hast made all things in Thy word, and in Thy wisdom hast formed man that he should have dominion over Thy creation, which has been made by Thee, and that he should set the world in order, in justice and equity, and in the uprightness of his heart should judge judgment. Give me the wisdom that sitteth by Thy throne, and cast me not away from among Thy servants. For I, Thy servant, and the son of Thy handmaiden, am an infirm man, of short life, and unable to understand justice and judgment. For if a man be perfect among the children of men, yet if Thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be counted as nought. Send therefore Thy wisdom from Thy holy heavens, and from the seat of Thy Majesty, that it may work with me, and that I may know what is acceptable before Thee " (Wisd. ix. 1).

The result of this prayer he himself describes, " I called upon Him, and there came to me the

Spirit of Wisdom, and I preferred it before kingdoms and thrones, and I deemed riches to be nothing in comparison with it."

But if created wisdom benefits in this wonderful manner from its dutiful subjection to, and faithful correspondence with, the gifts of the Increate and Eternal Wisdom, the lesson would be incomplete, if we did not also pause for a moment to contemplate the deplorable and terrible wreck of the created wisdom, whenever it comes to spurn its duty of subjection and dependence upon its Divine Creator.

Let us here for a moment contemplate Satan, as he was created, and what he has now become. By creation he was one of the princes of the court of heaven, standing in his own rank and order; all the glories of the court of heaven were open to him in his own degree, and in society with his fellow-princes. And as he was created, so he would have been confirmed in his principality, had he not in his pride chosen to break the bond by which he was united to his Creator. Such he was. What is he now? Cast out of heaven; his place knows him no

more; he is become a wandering spirit, the wreck of his former self; his wisdom turned into folly; and what remains from the wreck capable only of being applied to intents and purposes of malignity. Such is Satan! fallen from his high estate by his own pride: and the fall of men, even if, owing to the lesser dignity of their rank in creation, they lack the same height to fall from, is scarcely less signal, inasmuch as from its belonging to our own visible world, their fall is in consequence so much more level to our comprehension. Who, for example, can fail to be filled with a salutary fear at contemplating the terrible change that had taken place in Saul, the elect servant of God, when he stood faint and terror-stricken in the cave of the witch of Endor, as contrasted with same Saul, chosen of God to the royal dignity, to whom the armies of Israel, when he stood before them a head and shoulders taller than the rest of the people, cried out, "God save the king."

We have, then, but duly to reflect on the one hand, upon the wonderful estate of dignity, exaltation, and well-being in the present world

to which the created wisdom of man may be raised in the service of God and in faithful submission to Him; and on the other hand, upon the amazing and terrible wreck to which the created spirit may fall, where it separates itself by pride and unbelief from its duty of service and subjection to the Divine Creator, in order to enter into the full meaning of the words of the inspired writer, who says,—“Be joined to God, and have patience, that thy life at the last may come to abound” (Ecclus. ii. 3).

This, then, is the wisdom of the intelligent creature—“*to be joined to God.*” “My Father,” says Christ, “worketh hitherto, and I work, and all the works of God are done in wisdom, and if man, whose life it is to do man’s works, desires to be able to do them in wisdom, he must seek to be joined to God. “O Wisdom,” says the Church, “thou that comest from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end, ordering all things in strength and sweetness, come to teach us the way of prudence,” which way is—“Be joined to God, and have patience.”

Now let us contemplate the example of our great and Holy Mother. If our wisdom consists in our being joined to God, we must not fail to remember that the power of being joined to Him does not reside in us; we must necessarily wait for the good pleasure and choice of God, calling us to receive the honour and dignity of being joined to Him. "You have not chosen me," says our Lord to His Apostles, "but I have chosen you." But in whatever way God may be pleased to make choice of us to receive His call to come to be united to Him, He will, notwithstanding, perfectly respect the free will which He has Himself created, He will leave us the unrestrained liberty to choose for ourselves, to accept His call to come to be joined to Him or to refuse. The voice of His Holy Spirit of Wisdom, indeed, will not fail to say to us, "Be joined to God and have patience;" but it will rest entirely with ourselves to open or to shut our ears to His words.

It was precisely in this manner that God was pleased to treat with the Blessed Virgin

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through His Messenger the holy Archangel Gabriel—"Hail Mary" were the Angel's first words, "full of grace! Blessed art thou among women." Here is the Divine invitation unfolded in its first general outline. The salutation, thus far unfolded, gives rise in her mind to anxious thought, as to what its ulterior purpose may prove. The messenger proceeds: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give to Him the Throne of His father David, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Here is the Divine invitation, in all its marvellous purport, proposing to the creature to be united to God in a way of grandeur without equal. There follows the reply of the Holy Virgin urging the just ground why she should demur to the proposal; a demur which the great Archangel removes by his assurance; and

then comes the moment for deciding—shall she to whom the invitation has been given, say yes or no to it. Mary, led by the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, says to the angel, “Behold the handmaiden of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.” Here is the example of her perfect correspondence with the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, ever counselling and saying to men, “Be joined to God, and have patience.”

How unspeakably exalted is now Mary’s new life, that has its beginning from the very moment of her utterance of the words, “Behold the handmaiden of the Lord,” and yet how great also is the burden of endurance that is to be associated with the exaltation, through the whole of her subsequent life on earth. Nevertheless, as the Holy Spirit of Wisdom prompted her acceptance of the exaltation, so also it continued with her to the last, to aid her to bear the burden of endurance annexed to it. This example of the Great Christian Mother of the household of faith comes home here to every one of her children. We perhaps do not sufficiently reflect, owing to our having for the most part

had the choice, which Mary made in her own person, of being united to God, made for us in our infancy by the choice of others acting in our name, when we received the Sacrament of our being united to God. Nevertheless, in the same way as Mary chose the good part which shall never be taken away from her, to be united to God as His handmaiden, we, her children, in our degree have made a similar choice in our Christian baptism to become children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. The Mother in this respect sets the example, and the children follow it. Then, as she, led by the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, never once afterwards broke her union with God that began in the words, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord," let us her children take pattern by our Great Mother's example, and constantly and humbly implore the aid and succour of the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, that we may be able to preserve, in like manner, our union with God that has been graciously given to us in the Holy Sacrament of our regeneration.

And for as much as in the holy and serious work, which must come to all in due time, of making the choice of a state of life, there must necessarily be involved matter of weighty import intimately affecting our union with God ; and as God undoubtedly deigns in mercy to call many chosen souls to serve Him in the narrow and holy way of religious discipline, while He calls all to form a wise and prudent choice of their state of life, let us never forget that the good gift of the Holy Spirit of Wisdom will never be withheld at this momentous time from those who patiently and humbly ask for it. Let us also never cease to keep before our minds, should it be found that God is really calling and inviting us to some higher way of perfection, and some closer union with Himself than is possible in the ordinary ways of life, that she, who was invited to the highest and closest degree of possible union with God, never once had occasion to repent having spoken the dutiful words, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word."

And lastly, not to take leave of our subject

without a few parting words in conclusion, what a Paradise would not the society of the earth become, if we all followed the pattern of our Holy Christian Mother in being led, like her, by the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. "Send forth Thy Spirit, O Lord," exclaims the holy Psalmist, "and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth." But, alas ! how truly does not the same holy Psalmist exclaim, "Man, being constituted in honour, hath no understanding, and is compared to the senseless beasts" (Ps. xlviii. 21). How imperfectly do we seem willing to understand what great things God has done in this present life, and is continually ready to do for us.

Holy Mother of God, Holy Mother of all the Christian people, speak to thy children thyself with a mother's voice and a mother's authority; say to them in the words of Moses, "O people, foolish and unwise, is this the return thou makest to thy God?" But do you, my children, not in truth desire to see good days, and do you not pray that the Lord your God would make you to abound in all good things, that He should open

His best treasure, Heaven, to you, and bless all the works of your hands? Yet how can you truly desire all these good things, if you fail to understand and to set due and becoming store on the most choice sevenfold gifts of His Holy Spirit, which He has specially provided for your needs, and is ever willing to give you most abundantly.

- I. The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.
- II. The Spirit of Piety.
- III. The Spirit of Knowledge.
- IV. The Spirit of Fortitude.
- V. The Spirit of Counsel.
- VI. The Spirit of Understanding.
- VII. The Spirit of Wisdom.

Come, then, my children, you are not wont to be stiffnecked to the voice of your Mother who calls to you, Take pattern by me; study for yourselves and see in what way I have received all these seven holy gifts. Judge for yourselves what great fruits they have brought forth in me, and what excellent fruits they may also not fail to bring forth in you. Take pattern by me; examine for yourselves, and then

answer me, Do not I, your Mother, afford you the incontestable proof that the light of these seven holy gifts is an "inextinguishable light, and that all good things have come to me with them, and an immeasurable exaltation by their hands" (Wisd. vii. 10). Answer me, my children, To what purpose does a loving mother place her own example before her children, if their love and affection for her does not prevail with them to do all that is in their power to take pattern by it? And when does a mother ever place before her children any other than such an example as that which, however infirm they may be, her children are still perfectly able to make the necessary attempt to follow? "Listen, then, my children, to me, and receive my words, that the years of your lives may be increased. Behold, I show you the way of wisdom, and lead you to the paths of justice, into which, when you shall have entered, your steps shall not be straitened, and when you run, you shall not stumble" (Prov. iv. 10).

THE END.

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